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Christmas Count 1980-81

W. ROSS SILCOCK

MALVERN, IA.

The trend of ever-increasing numbers of reporting locations continued this year, with a record 39 reports received. All of last year's 36 counts repeated, and there were two new counts this year: Lucas, in Lucas County, and Tristate, in extreme southwest Iowa. Ames returned to the fold after a few years of reporting to *American Birds* but not *Iowa Bird Life*. Coverage of most areas of the state is now very good.

After some close calls in recent years, Davenport sprinted away from the pack this year with a tremendous 77 species, leaving Omaha and Cedar Rapids far back at 64. Iowa City was third at 60, the only other count to reach the 60s. As expected, the low counts were from the north and northwest, Eldora and Westfield recording 27 species.

Because of the increased number of reporting localities, one might expect the total number of species recorded to increase also, but the extent of the increase was totally unexpected: a new record of 127 species, and number of parties also set new records, but were only slightly higher. The increased number of species recorded was a result of the amazing eight species new to the count (see below).

Milder weather increased numbers of certain species wintering in the state, especially in the southeast, and large numbers of winter finches were recorded. Waterfowl were also found in large numbers where water was open, especially at Rathbun Reservoir. Details on population changes are given later.

Common Loon: Although not unexpected on extensive open water, the one reported at Rathbun was a first. It was accompanied by large numbers of waterfowl, including a Pied-billed Grebe.

Sandhill Crane: One was at Riverton, with Snow Geese. Apparently it had been there about three weeks, but hunting season had precluded observation.

Eastern Phoebe: One was found at Yellow River Forest, for an amazing, but not entirely unprecedented northern states' CBC record.

Sedge Wren: Another amazing record, but the description from Cedar Rapids strongly suggests this species. It was observed closely for 15 minutes, and small size, buffy color, streaked cap (no eyeline mentioned), and white streakings on back were all noted.

Veery: Perhaps most incredible this year was this report from Omaha of a Veery in Fontenelle Forest. It was meticulously described, satisfying this at first highly disbelieving compiler. Incredible because in western Iowa the Veery is a rare spring migrant and almost unrecorded in fall. Perhaps not incidentally, a Yellow-throated Warbler was at an Omaha feeder until December 24, but was outside the count circle.

Curve-billed Thrasher: After the species above, this one hardly pales by comparison. What appears to be Iowa's second state record appeared at Solon in the Iowa City circle to be seen by many. Although its eye-color seemed somewhat abnormal (perhaps its whole metabolism was too), identification did not seem in doubt.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: Not unexpected in the course of time, but its spread from St. Louis, through Illinois has been slow. This one was at Hampton, Illinois, and was within the Davenport circle.

Hoary Redpoll: A bird with Common Redpolls was carefully studied at close range and meticulously described from Cedar Falls. Variability in plumage and overlap of plumage characteristics with Common Redpoll make conclusive

identification difficult, but this bird had immaculate rump and under-tail covert areas. Furthermore, its behavior was described in such a way that it was reminiscent of behavior I have seen in mixed flocks at Duluth.

The following are other good birds, which in normal years would be the best:

Greater Scaup: Two birds at Iowa City were the second count record, but better identification ability will probably prove this species to be regular amongst diving ducks in winter.

Varied Thrush: Fourth count record: one seen at Cedar Falls. This species is becoming more regular at feeders in the north-central United States.

Pine Grosbeak: Again at Cedar Falls: a single bird reported for a fourth count record.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: A seventh count record, represented by one bird at DeSoto NWR in the same place as the six seen last year. This species has been found the past three years in southwest Iowa.

White-winged Scoter: The two birds at Davenport were an eighth count record.

Peregrine Falcon: A welcome appearance at (where else?) Cedar Falls, it is only the ninth count record of this species, the first since 1972.

Deletions

These birds were deleted from the final tabulation, for reasons given. This year showed a marked, but continuing, improvement in documentation, with particularly good jobs done at Cedar Falls, Omaha, and Davenport.

Turkey Vulture: One reported from Marshalltown was only described as having its wings in a "dihedral, and soaring in a wide circle". Wings of many raptors can have a dihedral appearance, especially when banking, but some information on the length of the observation, distance from the bird, and underwing pattern would have improved the credibility of the observation. While the identification may have been correct, the information submitted was insufficient to corroborate the unexpected occurrence of this species in winter.

Merlin: A bird seen in the Lucas circle was identified as a Merlin, but was deleted. It was described as "definitely not a Kestrel", and had a "white rump" and "swept back wings". The white rump would tend to eliminate Merlin and suggest perhaps Northern Harrier or even an accipiter, as accipiters have somewhat prominent white undertail coverts which at times and at certain angles can give the appearance of a white rump.

Merlins were also reported from the Omaha and Shenandoah, with satisfactory descriptions.

Swainson's Hawk: Thankfully only one was reported, from Oakville, and as no details were submitted, deletion was automatic.

Ringed Turtle Dove: Cedar Rapids reported one of this species, but the compiler noted that "It seems probable that the bird was one which escaped from a local cage-bird shop." Escapes do not qualify for CBCs. See also Monk Parakeet, next.

Monk Parakeet: One was reported from Princeton, and as in the case of the Ringed Turtle Dove, the question is not identification, but provenance. There is some indication that the bird was from an established breeding population in Illinois, if indeed any such exist. I must add here that this qualification must be kept in mind when reporting Wild Turkey and other game birds.

Northern Oriole: One was reported from Red Rock Lake unaccompanied by details and was deleted. This species is very rare in Iowa in winter, and when found is virtually a feeder exclusive.

Field Sparrow: Sixteen were reported at Rathbun and eight at Burlington

without details, and would have been deleted but for the well-documented reports of 18 other birds from Davenport (6), Muscatine (2), Oakville (9), and Princeton (1), thus confirming the fact that a few birds of this species lingered in southeast Iowa this year.

Chipping Sparrow: Six birds of this species were reported, and all deleted, as follows. One from Davenport was said to be in summer plumage, but this species changes plumage in winter, casting considerable doubt on the report (check Robbins' field guide). Four birds at Lucas were considered questionable by the compiler, with no details affixed, and so were also deleted. Finally, one from Rathbun with no details was deleted. I have noted in previous CBC summaries that this species is very rare in Iowa at CBC time, and is also difficult to identify in fall and winter.

Vesper Sparrow: This species may occur rarely in Iowa in winter, usually in the southeast, but must be documented. Accordingly the one report, undocumented from Lucas was deleted.

I received a suggestion from a no-doubt frustrated compiler that I mail along with the CBC summary form a list of the birds to be expected on Iowa CBCs with birds needing documentation being marked with an asterisk. This is a good suggestion, and I will try to follow through for next year's count.

Notable Misses

Amazingly, there were a few this year, notwithstanding the record species total.

Ruddy Duck: This species has been recorded only four of the last ten years, but its absence this year is surprising in view of the large numbers of waterfowl recorded.

Red-shouldered Hawk: This is probably the most significant miss, and one which will undoubtedly bother raptor enthusiasts in Iowa. It had not been missed in the last six years, and prior to that not since 1937!

Red Crossbill: This bird has been reported six of the last ten years, and its absence is surprising in light of the large numbers of winter finches found this year. However it is somewhat of an individualist, being rather erratic and unpredictable.

Lapland Longspur: This is the first miss for this species since 1953, but is not too surprising in that Horned Larks, its usual companions, were also virtually absent this year.

Population Comments

Below I have listed species highs set this year by individual localities.

Whistling Swan	1, Clinton (tie with old record)
Common Pintail	1,200, Rathbun
Redhead	40, Rathbun
Lesser Scaup	1,000, Rathbun
Greater Scaup	2, Iowa City (tie)
Red-breasted Merganser	150, Rathbun
Wild Turkey	60, Decorah
Bonaparte's Gull	4, Rathbun (most likely this species)
Snowy Owl	2, Red Rock and Spirit Lake (tie)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	8, Davenport
Blue Jay	367, Davenport
Black-capped Chickadee	700, Cedar Rapids
Brown Creeper	74, Davenport
Varied Thrush	1, Cedar Falls (tie)

Hermit Thrush	1, Davenport and Lost Nation (tie)
Cedar Waxwing	367, Dubuque
Red-winged Blackbird	13,485, Davenport
Northern Cardinal	517, Davenport
Pine Siskin	237, Davenport
American Tree Sparrow	2,392, Shenandoah
Swamp Sparrow	37, Shenandoah

As can be seen, many of these new highs involve species which are found in Iowa in greater numbers during milder winters, so-called "half-hardy" species. They are discussed in more detail below.

All totals below are Birds Per Party (BPP), figured on a statewide basis, keeping in mind that some bias is involved because some counts have more feeder watchers than others. The four numbers after the species name are the BPP for the last four years' counts, 1977-78, 1978-79, 1979-80, and 1980-81.

Snow Goose (331; 369; 659; 1481): The steady increase in numbers reflects the propensity for this species to winter further north in greater numbers each year, especially in mild open winters.

Black Duck (0.3; 0.3; 0.45; 1.3): The steady increase is independent of the Mallard numbers, and may indicate increased observer awareness, or possibly that Black Duck genes are increasing in the Mallard gene pool to the extent that Black Duck phenotypes are being expressed with greater frequency.

Red-tailed Hawk (2.8; 2.7; 0.8; 2.8): Numbers are back to normal after last year's slump. There were more immatures in the state also, an indication that the mild weather and lack of snow cover allowed the population as a whole to winter further north.

Rough-legged Hawk (1.1; 0.6; 0.3; 0.5): Although numbers increased after last year, they did not return to prior levels, possibly a cause for concern. On the other hand, more birds may have stayed north due to mild weather.

Bald Eagle (3.2; 2.0; 1.35; 1.8): Also up over last year, but also not up to prior levels. At least in the southwest there seemed to be a high proportion of adults and total numbers seemed lower.

Northern Harrier (0.35; 0.3; 0.2; 0.4): Again a recovery, in this case to prior levels, as in the case of the Red-tail. Open fields are probably a contributing factor.

Great Horned Owl (0.6; 0.8; 1.0; 1.0): A steady increase, possibly due to better owling effort before daylight. This species is doing well, however.

Barred Owl (0.25; 0.3; 0.3; 0.45): Again an increase, also probably due to better coverage. Indeed, population increase in this species would tend to be limited by habitat in Iowa.

Common Flicker (3.8; 3.75; 5.3; 3.8): This migratory woodpecker probably remained in the state due to mild weather and (presumably) sufficient food supply. Resident woodpeckers (see below) maintained fairly steady numbers.

Red-bellied Woodpecker (0.4; 0.4; 0.5; 0.5): Reasonably steady levels.

Red-headed Woodpecker (1.0; 0.3; 8.7; 6.55): Numbers have been good the last two years, in comparison with the prior two cold winters. Numbers tend to fluctuate widely for this mobile woodpecker.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (0.1; 0.1; 0.15; 0.2): Along with Common Flicker, this migratory woodpecker also stayed in increased numbers in the state.

Hairy Woodpecker (2.1; 2.8; 2.6; 2.4): This resident species shows a steady population, after a few years of increases (see last year's summary).

Downy Woodpecker (11, 12, 9, 11): Again, rather steady numbers, although there was somewhat of a drop last year.

Horned Lark (33, 36, 2.4; 1.0): As can be seen, a tremendous drop from the cold

and snowy winters of 1977-78 and 1978-79. While open fields make them difficult to find, I believe that there were far fewer Horned Larks in the state this year.

Blue Jay (14; 13; 19; 21): A 37 percent increase over the prior three-year average, probably due to mild weather conditions.

American Crow (34; 23; 35; 57): A 64 percent increase over the prior three-year average, again a result of milder weather. Higher numbers were reported statewide, but the mild weather apparently allowed some larger concentrations to stay within the state, especially in the southeast, such as the 2878 at Oakville. These large concentrations tend to be the most strongly migratory (see also black-birds) and normally winter in southern state.

Black-capped Chickadee (25; 27; 25; 31): This species increased some 20 percent over its prior three-year average, not as large an increase as some other species, but it is not as migratory as some of the other lingerers.

Tufted Titmouse (4.1; 3.1; 2.1; 2.2): The decline of the previous three years was arrested this year, but at a low level, suggesting problems for this species, possibly related to the increase in White-breasted Nuthatch (below).

White-breasted Nuthatch (7.7; 7.5; 7.9; 9.45): The increase shown by this sedentary species may be due to increased survival of this year's hatch, or possibly an increasing population may be ousting competing hole-nesters, such as the Tufted Titmouse, which occupies the same habitat.

Red-breasted Nuthatch (0.3; 0.3; 0.03; 0.4): A good recovery after last year's virtual absence, seven above the high levels of the prior two years. Most "northern invaders" increased in numbers this year, especially winter finches.

Brown Creeper (0.9; 1.05; 1.0; 1.5): Another species wintering in greater numbers further north than usual, showing a 56 percent increase over the prior three-year average.

American Robin (7.2; 0.9; 16; 4.8): Numbers of this species have fluctuated remarkably the past four years, apparently without relation to the weather conditions. Even this year's berry crop was excellent. Although a "half-hardy" species, it would not be expected to remain north of Iowa in large numbers, but it is difficult to explain why it would leave the state this year. Perhaps a clue is presented by the corresponding decline in Cedar Waxwing this year, another berry-eater (below).

Golden-crowned Kinglet (0.1; 0.3; 0.4; 0.4): A definite recovery from the two cold winters of 1977-78 and 1978-79.

Cedar Waxwing (2.4; 8.6; 13; 8.7): This year showed a significant decrease, probably easier to explain than in the case of the Robin, as this species is more of a northerner, wintering further north than the Robin. This year it probably remained north in greater numbers.

House Sparrow (198; 157; 162; 228): This is a 33 percent increase over the prior three-year average, suggesting that mild weather has allowed better survival of this year's hatch. There has also been a well-documented movement of the population center of this species from urban areas (big cities) to rural livestock-feeding areas (the midwest farm states).

Meadowlark (2.0; 6.9; 0.8; 0.4): Continuing last year's disappearing act, these birds disappeared almost entirely this year, a far cry from the levels of 1977-78 and 1978-79. This is hard to explain, in that mild weather and open fields should retain numbers of these birds. Perhaps the "Horned Lark effect" operates here, in that open fields spread the meadowlarks out, making them hard to find.

Compilers are being more careful reporting meadowlarks, listing them as "sp." unless identified to species by song, calls, or plumage. My feeling is that there are few (if any?) Eastern Meadowlarks in the state in winter, except

possibly in the southeast.

Red-winged Blackbird (28; 38; 22; 93): Numbers were far above normal mainly because of the large group of 13,484 (70 percent of the statewide total) at Davenport. This situation parallels that of the American Crow, where mild weather allowed large concentrations to remain within the state.

Common Grackle (27; 18; 17; 45): Strong increase again a result of large flocks remaining in the state, especially at Ottumwa (3000) and Davenport (5442).

Brown-headed Cowbird (1.5; 1.0; 0.8; 19): Strong increase due to the large number reported from Ottumwa (3000). This species is normally far less common in winter than the two preceding, and the estimates of 3000 of each at Ottumwa seem a little suspicious. Careful estimates are of much value, especially in analyses such as this.

Evening Grosbeak (0.2; 0.1; 0.2; 0.6): Although numbers are not great, this species increased markedly this year, paralleling the gains in other winter finches.

Purple Finch (3.3; 3.7; 0.7; 6.7): This winter finch increased markedly after last year's drought, this year's totals being two-fold those of the prior two winters.

Common Redpoll (3.1; 0.1; 0.0; 0.3): This was not a redpoll year, even though some were reported, a gain from last year's absence. However this year's levels were only one-tenth those of 1977-78, which reminds us that "winter finches" are not a homogeneous group, but invade at different times, sometimes coincidentally, to give us what we like to call a "winter finch year".

Pine Siskin (3.1; 2.1; 0.1; 11): Obviously this was a siskin year, in contrast to the redpoll case. Totals this year were three or four times those of the relatively good year in 1977-78.

American Goldfinch (14; 12; 13; 18): An increase here, but only about 37 percent over the prior three-year average. Being a relatively sedentary species, the increase may reflect good survival of this year's fledglings, as well as a minor influx from the north.

Northern Junco (77; 77; 70; 98): The 31 percent increase here is similar in magnitude to increases shown by other species mentioned above induced to remain somewhat further north than usual.

American Tree Sparrow (61; 41; 56; 89): An even greater increase here (68 percent) than for the Northern Junco, indicating that the center of abundance of the wintering population was closer to Iowa than in some other years.

Harris Sparrow (3.9; 1.7; 1.7; 1.4): Following the concern expressed last year, this species continued its decline. Possibly dry weather conditions in its breeding range may be a contributing factor.

Addenda to Table

Several localities reported birds unidentified to species, and I have listed these here, except for "Meadowlark sp.", which is included in the table. In cases where a listing here would deprive a locality of a species in the table, such as "Shrike sp." with no other shrikes reported, I arbitrarily assigned such listings to whichever species I considered most likely at that locality. I have noted these cases here, as well as additional forms such as "Oregon Junco".

Duck sp.	DeSoto NWR 3; Omaha 85; Rathbun 5000.
Scaup sp.	Muscataine 4 (listed as Lesser in table).
Accipiter sp.	Iowa City 2; Omaha 1 (listed as Sharp-shinned in table).
Buteo sp.	Ames 3; DeSoto NWR 5; Iowa City 1; Omaha 4; Shenandoah 1; Tristate 1.
Gull sp.	Davenport 22; Rathbun 4 (described as "black-headed" and listed as Bonaparte's in table).

Owl sp.	Ames 1; Iowa City 2.
Red-shafted Flicker	DeSoto NWR 2; Omaha 1.
Thrush sp.	Lost Nation 1 (listed as Hermit in table).
Shrike sp.	Marble Rock 1; Mason City 1 (listed as Northern in table).
Blackbird sp.	DeSoto NWR 75; Omaha 14.
Oregon Junco	Ames 4; DeSoto NWR 3; Omaha 5.

1. ALLEMAN (15 mile diameter circle entered on Alleman and including Big Creek Lake, Chichaqua Wildlife Refuge, Jester Park, Saylorville Dam north to Jester Park, and areas between these locations.) Dec. 28: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 20-40; wind: 2 mph from S. Partly cloudy, trace snow on ground, some open water.

Observers (9) in 3 parties: plus 2 at feeders; Laura Greffinius, Henie, John McGlothlen, Dick Mooney, Dean Mosman (compiler), Diane Mosman, Mike Mosman, Alma Smic, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Studer, plus Steve Fairbanks.

Details of unusual observations: Northern Shrike was seen at close range by 5 observers. It was an immature with brown plumage, barred breast, mask only to bill and light lower mandible.

2. AMES (A 15-mile diameter circle centered on I-35 and US 30.) Dec. 20: 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. -4 to 10; wind: 0-10 mph from NW; 0-1 in snow cover. Fresh water mostly frozen.

Observers (40) in 11 parties, including 4 at feeders: John Balinsky, John Banschbach, George Brown, Gordon Brown, Cele Burnett, Lois Carr, Janice Coy, Mark Dinsmore, Steve Dinsmore, Jack Dodd, Lee Ellis, Linda Erickson, Sven Gafert, Mike Geddes, Anne Haberer, Dick Halberg, Barbara Halligan, James and Joanne Jarvis, Robert Kohlsdorf, Paul Martsching, Gary Marty, John Mayfield, Dianne Mumm, Jim Murdock, Richard and Terrina Nuss, Lori Paul, Edwin Powell, Gary Rindan, Michael Roughton, Mark Ryan, Ron Sarson, Carol Sweeney, Richard Trump, Ken Utterson, Judy and Pete Van Der Linden, Hank Zalatel (compiler), Linda Zalatel.

Details of unusual observations: Documentation received.

Other species seen during census period: Winter Wren, Pine Grosbeak.

Comments: Notable species that were not seen were the Red-winged Blackbird and the Meadowlark. Birds seen that were new this year to our count included a Great Blue Heron, Cooper's Hawk, and a Brewer's Blackbird.

3. BURLINGTON (A 15-mile diameter circle centered on Hwy. 99 at Flint Creek bridge, including Lock & Dam 18 and Mississippi River bottoms.) Dec. 20: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 5-15; wind: 5-10 mph from N. Partly cloudy, no snow cover, Mississippi 80 percent frozen.

Observers (10) in 6 parties: Charles Fuller (compiler), Jane Fuller, James and Karole Fuller, Tim Gates, Gail George, Sharon Kaufman, Harold Linder, Anna Mae Lowther, Lynn McKeown.

Other species seen during census period: Pied-billed Grebe, Redhead, Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, Snowy Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch.

4. CEDAR FALLS (A 15-mile diameter circle centered at the intersection of U.S. 20 and Main Street in Cedar Falls, Ia. and including Black Hawk Park, Hartman Nature Reserve, University of Northern Iowa Biology Reserve, Mark Sand Prairie, and portions of the Leonard Katowski Greenbelt.) Dec. 27: 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 11-27; wind: 8-18 mph from S.E. Mostly cloudy, snow cover 0" to 1"; ponds and lakes frozen, streams and river partly open.

Observers (9) in 3 parties, plus 1 at feeder: Ruth Buck, Antoinette Camaratta, Eleanor Corwin, Russell Hays, Milo Mecham, Francis Moore (compiler), Joe Schaufenbuel, Lois Sherman, Tom and Tom, Jr. Stone. (Waterloo Audubon

Society)

Details of unusual observations: The Peregrine Falcon was seen near the Court center chasing Rock Doves along the Cedar River. The Varied Thrush had been in the vicinity for about three weeks prior to the count and we were lucky enough to see it on the count day. The Pine Grosbeak was a real "find" for two people who had never seen one before, found on the edge of Mark Sand Prairie in Black Hawk county. The Hoary Redpoll is about the most controversial of the unusual observations on this years count but all that have seen the bird from Waterloo have come to the basic conclusion that it is a Hoary Redpoll. For further details see attached documentations.

Other species seen during census period: Short-eared Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Thrasher, Red-winged Blackbird, White-throated Sparrow.

Comments: The Common Screech Owls were located by use of a small hand-held tape recorder. This has been a very good finch winter around the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area and helped the count numbers out quite a bit. A very cooperative adult male Varied Thrush showed up about three weeks before the count period and stayed around for the event. We had an unbelievable count total, new records for both species, 50; and for individuals seen, 6199.

5. CEDAR RAPIDS (A 15 mile diameter circle, centered Federal Building, as described 1972.) Dec. 20; 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. -5 to 11; wind 0-5 mph, NW. Clear, no snow cover, fresh water mostly frozen.

Observers (40) in 15 parties: Carol Bell, Robert Bradley, Duane Carr, Keith Carris, John Daniel, Floy Erickson, Shirley Foley, Dale Fye, Karl & Ruth Goellner, Linda & Terry Gucciardo, Harlo Hadow, Irene Haerther, Claire Hanson, Andy Hasley, Vicki Hixson, Beryl Layton, Lucile Liljedahl, Iris Muchmore, Brian & Weir Nelson, Fred & Ruth Nissen, Mark Ogden, Roberta and Ruth Oppedahl, Bert and Nancy Rosenberg, Joan Sanders, Lillian Serbousek, Bobbie Shaffer, Jane Shuttleworth, Rick Snyder, Joy Stoker, Fred Thompson, Gayle Wallace, Pete Wickham (compiler) Aldrich and Gladys Zobac. (Audubon Naturalist Soc. of Cedar Rapids).

Details of unusual species: Documentation received.

Seen during census period: Hooded Merganser, Bald Eagle.

6. CHEROKEE (15 mile diameter circle centered on U.S. 59 2 miles south of Larrabee, including Martins Access, the Little Sioux River, Mill Creek, and the Cherokee Sewage Lagoons). Dec. 21: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 14-20; wind: 1' mph from S-SW. Mostly cloudy, no snow cover, river 95 percent ice covered, ponds totally ice covered.

Observers (17) in 6 parties: Bertie, Sandi, and Joe Beals, Marion Brewer, Ray Cummins, Larry Farmer, Irwin Heusinkveld, Thaine Hopkins, Wally Jardine, Dave Johnson, Arlene Sweet, Shirley Wahlstrom. Plus at feeders: Jean Cook, Bill and Melba Grawburg, Eulas Quinn and Mildred Thompson. (Count compiler not present day of count, Dick Bierman.)

Other species seen during census period: Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Common Redpoll.

7. CLINTON (15 mile diameter circle, centered on Elk River Jct. same as previous years.) Jan. 3: 5:50 a.m. to 5:20 p.m. Temp. 11 to 18; wind: 10-25 mph from N.E. Clear, ground bare, river 90 percent ice covered.

Observers (11) in 3 parties: Brian, Corey and Lewis Blevins, Brad and Dennis Boyd, Don Graves, Fred Lescher, Kelly McKay, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), Clark Scott and Paul Van Nieuwenhuyse.

Details of unusual observations: Whistling Swan documented (PV-N, KMCK, FL).

Comments: Continued loss of habitat alarming. Large numbers of Cedar Waxwings and American Robins due to very good cedar berry crop.

8. DAVENPORT (15 mile diameter circle, centered on former toll house location on the I 74 bridge, same as previous years.) Dec. 21: 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 8 to 22; wind: 2-5 mph from S. Partly cloudy, ground bare, river, 95 percent ice covered.

Observers (42) in 21 parties, including 7 at feeders: Brian, Corey and Lewis Blevins, Brad Boyd, Rita Coyne, Ruth and Walter Dau, Tim Dwyer, Elton and Margaret Fawks, Pat Frye, Don Graves, Allan Hahn, Dorothy Hall, Mary Hawkinson, Warren High, Gene Hollen, Bill and Tom Kent, Art and Janet Killian, Judy and Larry Linder, Kelly McKay, Virginia Martin, Margaret Milota, Dave Nelson, Mike Newlon, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), Mel Peterson, Harold Ray, Chris Reed, Robert Salmonson, Clark Scott, Tom Shires, Mrs. Forest Smith, Mrs. John Smith, Tom Standt, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Swanson and Chris Wadle.

Details of unusual observations: Glaucous Gull, White-winged Scoters, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow and Fox Sparrow were documented. Also included in the documentation was Eurasian Tree Sparrow which was seen on the Illinois side of the river.

Other species seen during census period: Bufflehead, Old Squaw, Broad-winged Hawk, Common Snipe, Brown Thrasher, Shrike sp., Rufous-sided Towhee.

Comments: Largest species number of waterfowl ever found on this count. New high individual counts for thirteen species.

9. DECORAH (Center NE corner S24, T99N, R8W). Dec. 20: 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. -5 to 10; wind: 0-5 mph from NW. Clear, no snow cover, water partly open.

Observers (15) in 5 parties: Florence Albright, Francis Arness, Elizabeth Bottorff, Alan Branham, Garth Carlson, Ruth Fretheim, Oivind Hovde, Darwin (compiler), Pat and Paul Koenig, Ron Lecander, Marlene Michel, Arnold and Dolores Rohm, Joe Schaufenbuel, Warren Wicks.

Details of unusual observations: Golden Eagle documented.

10. DES MOINES (A 15-mile diameter circle on 63rd and Grand Ave. including Greenwood, Ashworth, Walnut Wood and Brown Wood Parks, Easter Lake, Waterworks Park and the NW quadrant of town.) Dec. 20: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Temp. 0-17; wind: 0-5 mph from N.W. Clear and no ground cover, very little open water.

Observers (15) in 5 parties: Eloise Armstrong, Eugene Armstrong (compiler), Bill Boller, Margaret Brooke, Randy Brose, Ruth Buckles, Oliver Graves, Laura Greffenius, Gladys Haskell, Chris Laubach, Rene Laubach, Pauly Mooney, Richard Mooney, Dennis Thompson, Virginia VanLiew and at a feeder, Lurene Wartens.

11. DeSOTO NWR (Centered on refuge headquarters building as described in 1978 and 1979). Dec. 21: 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 13-28; wind: 0-5 mph. Calm, mostly to partly cloudy with no snow cover.

Observers (21) in 5 parties: Tanya Bray, Charles Fritschen, Ruth Gochenour, Ruth Green, Janet Green, Alan Grenon, Betty Grenon, Rev. Thomas Hoffman, Jim Kovanda, Sandy Kovanda, David Menke (compiler), Steve Moorman, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, June Parks, Neal Ratzlaff, B. J. Rose, Ross Silcock, Eric Volden, Barb Wilson, Rick Wright.

Details of unusual observations: Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird (see documentation sheet).

Comments: 55 spp. lower than last year's 64 probably due to colder weather, poorer wild food crop and less open water.

12. DUBUQUE (15 mile diameter circle with center at Center Grove Cemetery

and including Linwood, Industrial Island, John Deere, Durango, Peosta, Swiss Valley, Massey, East Dubuque.) Dec. 20: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp. -4-10; wind: 0-6 mph from NW. Clear, light dusting of snow, river mostly frozen, wild food crop good.

Observers (26) in 9 parties, plus 4 at feeders: Steven and Susan Bromme, Jack Brooks, Frieda and George Crossley (compiler), Jim and T. J. Eischeid, Adele, John and Mark Feller, Lila and Willis Gruwell, David Hartig, William Herrmann, Joan Higley, Paul Kirpes, Brian Larson, Steven Lemon, Delbert Ludwig, John and Leta Miller, James Rooks, Agnes Schmit, Phyllis Shultz, John Stampe, Nathan Terwilleger, Neil Trevethen, Robert Walton, Wauneta Wiederaenders, Jan Williams.

Details of unusual observations: The Bohemian Waxwings were compared with a large flock of Cedar Waxwings for size, white on wing, and undertail coverts at 25-30 feet in a cedar grove in good light by Wm. Herrmann and John Feller. The Gray Catbird observed feeding on multiflora rose hips gave its cat-call for Robert Walton and Jim and T. J. Eischeid; had been seen for two days previously.

Other species seen during census period: Cooper's Hawk, Northern Harrier.

13. ELDORA (15 mile diameter circle centered on Gifford and including Long, Bates, Pine Lake, Steamboat Rock and Reece Parks, roadsides and fields in between.) Dec. 23: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 20 to 32; wind: calm-5 mph from NW. Clear to completely overcast with intermittent rain changing to snow. Lake and river 95 percent frozen over; below dam open stream to river.

Observers (2) in 1 party: Garnita Seward and Ramona Sommerlot (compiler).

Details of unusual observations: 1 Northern Shrike seen perched on a utility line in open country. Were able to approach close enough to see black mask ended at bill; also the lighter lower mandible.

Other species seen during census period: Common Grackle, American Kestrel.

Comments: Most birds seen in a.m., as weather conditions gradually worsened. Elated to find Evening Grosbeaks and N. Shrike. Noted absence of American Robin.

14. IOWA CITY (A 15-mile diameter circle centered on the intersection of US 218 and County Rd. F-28, west of North Liberty, and including Lake Macbride, the Coralville Reservoir, Swan Lake and Kent Park.) Dec. 20: 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 0-11; wind: 0-5 mph from W. Weather clear, no snow cover, water areas mostly frozen.

Observers (37) in 7 parties, one at feeder: Carl Bendorf, Ruby Berridge, Brian, Corey and Lewis Blevins, Mona and Noel Brown, Dorothy and Sheraton Burr, Linnea Carlson, Ed and Mary Folk, Edwin Gentzler, Marlyn Glasson, Lanny Haldy, Rick Hollis, Marion and Jane Huit, Jack Kaplan, Tom and William Kent, Tim Kemmis, Bernie Knight, Carmen and Ramona McGurk, Kelley McKay, Dawson Mohler, Carol and Mike Newlon (compiler), Evelyn Oaks, Pete Petersen, Dan Ray, Barb Rohrbaugh, Jim and Joey Sandrock, Clark Scott, Tom Shires, Tom Staudt, Barb Wieser, Ruth Williams.

Details of unusual observations: submitted documentations.

Comments: Great Horned, Barred, C. Screech Owl numbers up because of increased owling effort and ideal weather, but Long-ears and Short-ears are down. Bobwhite again not recorded; apparently the hard winters of 76-78 did them in. Ring-necked Pheasants also down. So is E. Starling. Missed Pileated Wdpkr. first time in 7 years (pair still present, however). Small amount of unfrozen water left concentrated ducks; one more day and they were gone. Greater Scaup, G. Catbird, Curve-billed Thrasher new to count. Thrasher has been at Berridge feeder since November and has been seen by many. A documentation form written at time of

original sightings submitted.

15. JAMAICA (A 15-mile diameter circle centered 1½ miles west and 4 miles south of Jamaica, Iowa, including Springbrook State Park, Lakin Slough, Bays Branch Area, Lake Panorama and the Middle Coon River). Jan. 3: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 9-20; wind: 10-20 mph from NW. Ground clear of snow; lakes 95-100 percent frozen; rivers and creeks 90 percent frozen with open areas below dams and springs. Sky clear.

One observer: Raymond Cummins.

Details of unusual observations: A single Cedar Waxwing was not unexpected, but is a new species for the count. Purple Finch numbers were unusually high and widely scattered.

16. KEOSAUQUA (15 mile diameter circle centered on Keosauqua, and including Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, country roads, Des Moines River bottoms and bluffs.) Dec. 31: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 27-38; wind: 5-15 mph from NW. Clear, changing to heavy overcast; patches of snow, otherwise open ground; river mostly frozen, but with number of small to moderate open areas.

Observers (3) in 1 party: Kathy Fisher (compiler), Oneita Fisher, Mike Zahs, plus Dick Fisher at feeders.

Details of unusual observations: Eagles (9 adult, 4 imm.) were along river from Kilbourne to Lacey-Keo. 78 Crows were on river ice at Kilbourne. Large flock (170) Goldfinches was feeding on Common Ragweed; suddenly flew to overhead wires and lined up like swallows for easy count. Ducks all in river at county park area and were observed at close range for 20 min.; small, white-headed Bufflehead and mate were easily spotted, and much darker Black Ducks easily distinguishable. Mourning Doves were all in one flock in unplowed cornfield. Kingfisher was seen at close range on Jan. 2 near old locks at Keosauqua.

Other species seen during census period: Horned Lark, Herring Gull, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher.

Comments: Large flock (over 100) of Robins was present early in count period, but not on count day. Bobwhite have made good comeback after disastrous winter of '78. Purple Finches are still widely scattered. There was a short crop of acorns this year, accounting for absence of Red-headed Woodpeckers.

17. LAMONI (15 mile diameter circle centered at junction of I-35 and U.S. 69 east of Lamoni including country roads, pasture, farmland, and Nine Eagles State Park.) Dec. 26: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Temp. 20-30; wind: 5 mph from West. Partly cloudy, no snow cover, streams and ponds mostly frozen.

Observers (11) in 4 parties: Mrs. W. C. DeLong, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Gillaspey, J. Donald Gillaspey (compiler), Jim Gillaspey, Clark Livingston, Jeff Livingston, Dan Long, Arladine Nelson, Nancy Nelson and Lee Searles.

Details of unusual observations: We found five species of owls this year. We used a tape recorder both morning and evening to help locate owls.

Other species seen during census period: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin.

Comments: Am. Kestrels seem to frequent the vicinity of silage piled on ground or in trench (for mice). Field feeding birds follow cattle fed on ground or in large lots. Much habitat continues to be destroyed by bulldozing. Chisel plowing of fields instead of clean furrow plowing may produce some changes in the habits of wintering birds.

18. LOST NATION (A 15-mile diameter circle centered approximately 1½ miles south of Lost Nation and including Mockridge Wildlife Refuge, Wapsipinicon River, Eden Valley Refuge and Syracuse State Wildlife Area). Dec. 30: 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 25-27; wind: 10-20 mph from South. Overcast, no snow cover, Wapsi River, sloughs and ponds 90-100 percent ice covered.

Observers (16) in 5 parties: Lewis and Corey Blevins, Bob Bryant (compiler),

Lee & Lindsay Lee, Lilly McKay, Peter Petersen, Dawn and Dick Rowold, Clark Scott, Brett, Greg and Sandra Smith, Charles and June Wentworth, Jeanette Ruprecht at feeder.

Details of unusual observations: Fox Sparrow observed at feeder. Brown-backed Thrush not seen well enough to identify.

Comments: Tape recorder used to attract owls and other birds.

19. LUCAS (15 mile diameter circle, centered Lucas. Area covered included Stevens State Forest, and parts of the Chariton Ridge.) Dec. 20; 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 4-12; wind: 0-5 mph from N. Clear, no snow, water frozen.

Observers (13) in 5 parties: Beth Brown, Rose deLaubenfels, Betty Eis, Bill Gilbert, John and Carol Kein, Margaret Kuchenreuther, Blair Lawson, Tom Nicol-Thomas, Jim Sinclair (compiler), Rick Trieff, Bob Van Dorin, Ron Warnet.

Details of unusual observations: Merlin - see separate sheet, Loggerhead Shrike, close observation by three participants.

20. MARBLE ROCK (Same as previous years, actually no more than a 4-5 mile diameter circle centered 1 mile east of Marble Rock at Corset Alley.) Dec. 26: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp. 12-20; wind: none. Overcast all day. About one inch of snow in wooded areas, fields clear, streams open. Scattered open water on the Shell Rock River.

Observers (2) in 2 parties: Pearl Knoop (at feeder), Thomas J. Staudt (compiler).

Other species seen during census period: Common Grackle, Evening Grosbeak.

Comments: The total number of birds seen, 1487, is up 62 percent over the five year average on Christmas counts here. This helps to account for the large increase in the number of bird species seen. This increase is somewhat surprising considering that a number of wooded areas I usually bird in have been cleared for farm land or large numbers of dead trees have been taken for firewood.

21. MARSHALLTOWN (15-mile diameter circle centered on E27 one mile east of highway 14 and including Union Grove Lake, same as previous years.) Dec. 27: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Temp. 18-28; wind: 18-21 mph from S.E. Overcast to partly cloudy, very light snow cover, small streams frozen, Iowa river 95 percent frozen, Lake frozen except where spring feeds lake.

Observers (30) in 8 parties, plus 5 at feeders: Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Crowther, Mr. and Mrs. Norm Eige, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Forrester, Laura Glasgow, Wendell Graham, Mr. and Mrs. Orville Grimes, Orma Grimes, Mr. and Mrs. John King, Dennis Kingery, Carl Kurtz, Kathy Larson, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Lawrence, Mr. and Mrs. James Maish, Barb Morrison, Mrs. John Mowry, Harriett Olsen, Mr. and Mrs. James Plambeck, Mr. and Mrs. Les Ralston, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Savage (compiler), Nancy Slife, Mr. and Mrs. Fox Wheeler, Mr. and Mrs. James Wignall and Ruth Zorn.

Details of unusual observations: No Meadowlarks reported, only one Song Sparrow. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Laura Glasgow residence, Evening Grosbeaks at the Lester Lawrence feeder. Turkey Vulture observed by Laura Glasgow and Orville Grimes, they noted dihedral wings and it was soaring in a wide circle. Wild Turkeys seen northeast of Green Mountain in a corn stubble field, not documented.

22. MASON CITY (15 mile diameter circle centered on intersection of S56 and B25, including Shell Rock Preserve and many other conservation areas. Same as last year.) Jan. 3: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 0-9; wind: 15-20 mph from NW. Clear, cold day with wind chill around -40 degrees F. No snow cover, very few stretches of open water on river.

Observers (19) in 5 parties, plus 6 at feeders: Dorothy Brunner, Russell Brunner, Virgil Eness, Thelma Fromm, Daryl and Pat Hansen, Jim Hansen, Jim Heintzman, Curt Krieger (compiler), Beth Luehmann, Beth McBride, Richard and Genevieve Nelson, Reva and Harold Pedelty, Edna Peters, Helen Roberts, Roger and Mary Smith, Kevin Suter, Ben and Wendy VanGundy, Lester Wurn, Jim and Jan Walter.

Details of unusual observations: One Northern Junco was observed to be distinctly of the Oregon race.

Other species seen during census period: Snowy Owl, Common Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, White-throated Sparrow.

Comments: Good publicity this year may have helped encourage extra participants. Even with poor birding weather, we had successful coverage of our area.

23. MUSCATINE (15 mile diameter circle, centered on Lock and Dam 16, same as previous years.) Dec. 28: 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 24-36; wind: 10-15 mph from S.E. Mostly cloudy, ground with 1" snow generally, river 80 percent ice covered.

Observers (11) in 4 parties: Tim Dwyer, Allan Hahn, Judy and Larry Linder, Kelly McKay, Carol and Mike Newlon, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), Chris Reed and Clark Scott.

Details of unusual observations: Northern Shrike carefully observed and documented (KMCK,CS).

Comments: Surprisingly large number of Am. Robins. Very good cedar berry crop.

24. NORTH LINN (Centered at Rogers Crossing, 60 percent Farmland, 30 percent Parkland, 10 percent Streambanks including Wapsipinicon River.) Jan. 3: 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 8-17; wind: 10-20 mph from N. Mostly clear, dusting of snow, water mostly frozen.

Observers (23) in 8 parties, 1 at feeders: John Broze, Duane Carr, Keith Carris, Viola Deen at feeder, Shirley Foley, Dale Fye, Karl Goellner, Ruth Goellner, Vi Groth, Linda Gucciardo, Irene Haerther, Vicki Hixon, Jim Kettlekamp, Dave Ladd, Julia Ladd, Beryl Layton, Brian Nelson, Weir Nelson (compiler), Roberta Oppedahl, Bobby Shaffer, Jane Shuttleworth, Rick Snyder, Gayle Wallace, Rowe Zehms.

Comments: Too windy and cold for good birding, very spotty.

25. OAKVILLE (15 mile diameter circle, centered 4 miles E. of New Boston, Ill., same as previous years.) Jan. 1: 6 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Temp. 24-34; wind: 10-25 mph from W. Ground bare, river 85 percent ice covered, overcast clearing in afternoon.

Observers (11) in 4 parties: Bill Bertrand, Ron Cross, Allan Hahn, Judy and Larry Linder, Kelly McKay, Lynn McKeown, Dave Nelson, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), Clark Scott and Ed Weiderrecht.

Details of unusual observations: N. Groshawk documented (RC).

Comments: Habitat destruction becoming a factor, even in this thinly settled area.

26. OMAHA, NEB. (A 15-mile diameter circle centered at Offutt Air Force Base Lake to include Fontenelle Forest, Lake Manawa State Park, Plattsmouth Waterfowl Refuge and portions of the Platte and Missouri Rivers. Woodlands 53 percent, cultivated fields 25 percent, grassy fields and meadows 6 percent, rivers and lakes 7 percent, roadside weedy ditches 6 percent, parks and cemeteries 1 3/4 percent, residential 1 percent, dump 1/4 percent.) Dec. 20: 4:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Temp. 0-17; wind: 4-10 mph from SW. Clear a.m., mostly cloudy p.m., snow cover: none, rivers and some streams open.

Observers: (32) in 9 parties: David Ball, Steve Bellinghiere, Russell Benedick, Tanya Bray, Duane Bright, Hal Chase, Denise Graf, Marg Graf, Ruth Green, Janet Greer, Alan Grenon, Betty Grenon, Thomas Hoffman, Perry Jamieson, Stephanie Jamieson, Jim Kovanda, Sandy Kovanda, Joan Lastovica, David Menke, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Margaret Perry, Neal Ratzlaff, Chester Thomas, David Thomas, John Thomas, John Upchurch, John Weber, Marlene Weber, Melba Wigg (compiler), Gertrude Wood, Rick Wright.

In count area count period not seen count day: Snowy Owl, Brown Thrasher, Common Grackle.

27. OSKALOOSA (15 mile diameter circle including Lake Keomah centered on Mahaska Co. Courthouse.) Dec. 29: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 27-54; wind: 2 mph from NW. Clear all day, no snow cover, very little open water — only where swift current prevented freezing.

Observers (2) in 1 party: Keith and Irene Layton (compiler), and 6 at feeders.

Details of unusual observations: Good sized flocks of Mourning Doves feeding on spilled corn left in the open fields. Almost unbelievable flocks of Crows in the Sand Ridge area north of Eddyville. Huge flocks of Starlings congregated around farm feeding areas. One Gray Catbird moving about with a flock of 9 N. Cardinals.

Other species seen during census period: Robins, Barred Owls, Sharp-shinned Hawk.

28. OTTUMWA (A 15 mile diameter circle centered on highways 34 and 63 junction). Jan. 3: 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 15-23; wind: 20 mph from N. Light haze to clear in the a.m., and partly cloudy in the p.m. No snow cover.

Observers (11) in 3 parties: Charles and Darlene Ayres, Blossum Hallberg, Nelson Hoskins (compiler), Tom Leinhauser, Dick and Jean McGowen, Chuck Rinkle, Joan Schooley, Madeline Wymore and Gary Wyomore. Plus Bill and Neva Espy, Olive Griggs, Paul and Barbara Reidel and Nelda Rinkle at feeders.

Details of unusual observations: One Brown Thrasher at the feeder of Olive Griggs which was vouched for by Darlene Ayres.

Comments: Several Golden-crowned Kinglets, 8 Cedar Waxwings, 60 Horned Larks and 11 Bald Eagles (3 immature and 8 adult) seen roosting at Camp Arrowhead which is in the count area. Eagles seen by the resident director. There are several flocks of blackbirds (grackle, redwing and cowbird) in the area which probably total between 100,000 and 200,000 or more.

29. PRINCETON (15 mile diameter circle, centered at Follets, same as previous years.) Dec. 27: 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 11-26; wind: 2-15 mph from SE. Partly cloudy, ground mostly covered by 1" snow, river 75 percent ice covered.

Observers (8) in 3 parties: Corey and Lewis Blevins, Brad Boyd, Elton and Margaret Fawks, Kelly McKay, Peter C. Petersen (compiler), and Clark Scott.

Details of unusual observations: Monk Parakeet known to be inhabiting river island and adjacent mainland.

Other species seen during census period: Sharp-shinned Hawk and Northern Harrier.

30. RATHBUN (A 15 mile diameter circle centered 1 mile south of the center of Rathbun Lake and including the Dam area and part of the Wildlife Refuge.) Dec. 20: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 6-16; wind: 5 mph. Clear sky, no snow on the ground. Lake partially ice covered.

Observers (13) in 5 parties: Craig and Enid Coulter, Bill and Doris Cummings, Bill (compiler) and Marj. Heusinkveld, Nelson Hoskins, Kay Malmberg, Mary Milani, Maxine Morrow, Bondene Rissler, Kevin Schick, Charlotte Scott.

Details of unusual observations: Common Loon was seen very clearly by Nelson Hoskins with a 20-45 zoom scope, on lake. He reported he was very certain

because of coloring, heavy bill, speckling. Red-breasted Merganser was seen in unusually large numbers by Nelson Hoskins. They landed in the lake only about 50 feet from his vehicle. Four black-headed gulls seen by the Cummings party were at sufficient distance that they could not determine whether they were Franklins or Bonapartes.

Other species seen during census period: Swan (sp.), Snowy Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, Song Sparrow.

Comments: Swan was seen on Jan. 1 by Bill and Marj Heusinkveld. It was flying overhead our car near Rathbun Dam at a low elevation. We called Gladys Black and learned that one had been reported at Red Rock the day before.

31. RED ROCK LAKE (15 mile diameter circle centered on Hwy. 14 Mile-Long bridge and encompassing the north and south sides of Lake Red Rock, the Pleasantville area, part of the Knoxville area, and the Painted Rocks location.) Dec. 21: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Temp. 11 to 24; wind: 5-10 mph from N. Cloudy, no ground cover, no precipitation, 90 percent ice cover on the lake itself, ponds frozen over.

Observers (30) in 11 parties, plus 2 at feeders: Eloise and Eugene Armstrong, Gladys Black, Carol Brasher, Maxine Crane, Vic Daughtrey, Herb and Edith Dorow, Marjorie Fee, Mary and Paul Felsing, Mark Foust, Diane Foust, Curt Froyen, Bill Gilbert, Teresa Herrin (compiler), Ann, Paul and Kurt Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Johnston, Margaret Kuchenreuther, John Mertz, Dick Mooney, Dean, Mike and Diane Mosman, Jim Sinclair, Sandra Strong, Dennis Thompson, Robert Thornburg and Rick Trine.

Details of unusual observations: The two Snowy Owls were both reported from the north side of Lake Red Rock although at slightly different locations and at different times. The two Evening Grosbeaks were both seen at the Felsing's feeder.

Comments: The Red-headed Woodpecker count was down dramatically from last year's count (5 this year as compared to 49 last year).

32. SAC COUNTY (A 15 mile diameter circle beginning 1 mile N. of Highway 175 and 1 mile E. of Highway 169 - Sac County W. to Black Hawk Lake, N. to Sac City, E. to Hickory Grove in Calhoun Co. and S. to Auburn. Included Grant Park and the Raccoon River within the area.) Dec. 27: 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 28; wind: 5-20 mph from SW. Light snow cover - partly cloudy - Lakes in area all frozen. Raccoon River frozen except for small area.

Observers (8) in 4 parties: Lonnie and Carletta Brown, Greg Butcher, Ray Cummins, Clem and Rita Efta (co-compiler), Glen Jones, Margaret Seeck (co-compiler), plus Mrs. Carl Bruns, Bunny Clapper, Harold Gorman, Buck Howard, Ellen Schulte, Opal Schulte and B. I. Seversen at feeders.

Details of unusual observations: Golden-crowned Kinglets. Seen at 8 ft. below eye level. Small gray-green birds - black and white headlines - well observed by R.E. & M.S. White-crowned Sparrow - large sparrow with white and black head stripes. NO yellow near bill - NO prominent white throat patch. Observed by G.B., L.B. & C.B. Rufous-sided Towhee - adult male seen at leisure at thirty feet in the open by G.B., L.B. & C.B.

Comments: Note the large number of crows observed. All observers feel that the 967 listed in the count is very conservative.

3. SHENANDOAH (15 mile diameter circle centered on Farragut to include Riverton and the Riverton Refuge.) Dec. 20: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 1-15; wind: 0-1 mph from N. Mostly clear, water mostly frozen and no snow cover.

Observers (12) in 4 parties, plus 1 at feeder: Becky Bernthal, Barbara Cunningham, Ione Getscher, Ed Greenwood, Ruth Phipps, Wayne Phipps, Ross Silcock, Marie Spears, Dan Varland, Mary Beth Vaughn, Betty Walters (com-

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piler), and Barb Wilson.

Other species seen during census period: Pine Siskin.

34. SIOUX CITY (15 mile diameter centered on Sioux City Auditorium, area covered same as previous years.) Dec. 20: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. -3-15; wind: 5 mph from SE. Clear to partly cloudy, no snow cover, Missouri River open, other streams and rivers partly open, food supply abundant due to mild winter.

Observers (7) in 5 parties: Larry Farmer, Marla Grier, Marge Kennedy, Ray Kennedy, Robert L. Nickolson (compiler), Ed Sibley and Morgan Webb.

35. SPIRIT LAKE (Vicinity of Spirit Lake - exact area not given). Dec. 20: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. -6+17; wind: 3 mph from NW. Skies clear in a.m. becoming completely cloudy by early p.m. Snow cover: none in most areas, 10 percent in heavily wooded areas. Winter food conditions — good to excellent.

Observers (10): LaVonne Foote, Doug Harr (compiler), Dale and Gwen Hedin, Bob Keir, Bob Madsen, Jim and Linda Marshall, Bob Moats, Barbara Nelson.

36. TRISTATE 556 (A 15-mile diameter circle centered on mile 556 of the Missouri River to include Hamburg and Waubonsie State Park in Iowa, Nebraska City, including Arbor Lodge Park, in Nebraska with adjacent farmland, and a small portion of northwest Missouri.) Jan. 3: 7:15 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Temp. 10-25; wind: 0-15 mph from NW. Breezy and cold to start, becoming still, sunny and pleasant later. Water frozen, except Missouri River (ice-free) and some springs.

Observers (3) in 1 party: Ione Getscher, Ross Silcock, Barbara Wilson (compiler).

Details of unusual observations: Lincoln's Sparrow documented.

Comments: A new and promising area with some excellent and varied habitat.

37. WATERLOO (A 15 mile diameter circle centered on center of Sec. 2 Maxfield Twp., Bremer Co., Ia., including Sweet Marsh, Wapsipinicon River bottom, Seven Bridges Park, and surrounding farmland.) Jan. 3: 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Temp. 0-5; wind: 10-30 mph from NW. Clear, cold, breezy day with trace of snow on ground and water mostly all frozen.

Observers (7) in 3 parties: Antoinette Camarata, Russell Hays, Milo Mecham, Francis Moore, Bob Myers (compiler), Tom Stone and Tom Stone Jr.

Details of unusual observations: A gray (male) Northern Harrier was seen flying low over Sweet Marsh. White rump and long wings and tail were noted. The fairly mild winter has left many Red-headed Woodpeckers in our area. We have had several groves containing Long-eared and Short-eared Owls all fall.

38. WESTFIELD (15 mile diameter circle centered on section 16, Sioux township, Plymouth county and including Big Sioux river bottoms.) Jan. 4: 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 10-18; wind: 15-20 mph from ESE. Cloudy, no snow, scattered open spots on Sioux River.

Observers (4) in 3 parties, plus 1 at feeders: Carol and Larry Farmer (compiler) and Pat and Paul Williams.

Other species seen during census period: Robin and Northern Harrier.

Comments: This Christmas count is only one of many niches of northwest Iowa life affected by the untimely death of Carolyn Benne.

39. YELLOW RIVER FOREST (Center NE corner S8 T96N, R3W). Jan. 3: 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 0-5; wind: 5-25 mph from NNW. Clear, no snow cover, water partly open.

Observers (14) in 5 parties: Florence Albright, Francis Arness, Alan Branhagen, Garth Carlson, Julie Einspahr, Ruth Fretheim, Darwin Koenig (compiler), Pat and Paul Koenig, Marlene Michel, Arnold and Dolores Rohm, Joe Schaufenbuel, Warren Wicks.

Curve-billed Thrashers in Iowa

MICHAEL C. NEWLON
408 Wales Street
IOWA CITY, IOWA

From early November 1980 to the date of this writing (February 1981) a Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) has come regularly to the feeder of Carl and Ruby Jean Berridge of Solon, Iowa. Thanks to their hospitality it has been seen by dozens of birders and excellent diagnostic photographs taken. This was the first documented record of the species for Iowa, although there was a previous sight record from Spirit Lake (Wallace, 1975).

The Solon Curve-billed Thrasher is generally similar to a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) in size and build but is uniform grey above; the underparts are paler grey, with teardrop-shaped spots of darker grey on the breast, and the undertail coverts are washed with buff. There is a dark malar stripe. The heavy, strongly-decurved bill is dark grey, as are the legs. It has two faint pale wingbars, rather distinct breast spotting, and white spots in the corners of the tail; these are characteristics of birds found in the eastern portions of the species' range, from the Arizona-New Mexico border eastward. The iris color of the Solon Curve-billed Thrasher is deep yellow, however all field guides consulted state that iris color in this species ranges from pale orange to deep red. It is possible that the yellow iris indicates immaturity, as Brown Thrashers in their first fall have pale yellowish-grey irises that turn to bright yellow by the following spring. Bendire's Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*), never recorded from Iowa, does have a yellow iris and is similar in plumage to the Curve-billed, but has a shorter, straight bill unlike the deeply decurved bill of the Solon bird. (The Sage Thrasher *Oreoscoptes montanus*, which has occurred in Iowa, is smaller and shorter-tailed than the three species mentioned above, is dark brown above and heavily streaked below, and has two conspicuous white wingbars, white spots in the corners of the tail, and a short, rather thrush-like bill.)

A photograph of the Solon bird was sent to Gale Monson of Tucson, Arizona, co-author of *Birds of Arizona*. He concurs in its identification as a Curve-billed Thrasher and states that it is probably of the subspecies *celsum*, found from eastern Arizona to western Texas.

The Solon Curve-billed Thrasher came to the Berridges' feeder every 1-2 hours and ate steadily for about five minutes, then sat on the roof of the feeder for a short time before flying off. As the winter weather became colder, it began to shield its legs from the cold by squatting on its tarsi while it was at the feeder. When not feeding it spent most of its time in a nearby brushy creek bottom. When it first arrived at the Berridges it drove all other birds, even Blue Jays, away from the feeder, but as time went on it became more tolerant.

A second Iowa Curve-billed Thrasher was reported on January 28, 1981, by Charlotte Scott. This bird had been at the feeder of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Drumm, on the north shore of Lake Rathbun at the western edge of Honey Creek State Park, Appanoose County, since late September 1980. On January 31, Tom Kent, Tom Shires, and I, through the courtesy of the Drumms, were able to see and to photograph this bird. Compared to the Solon curve-bill, this bird had a much more orange iris, larger white patches in the tail, and fainter wingbars. Like the Solon bird it spent most of its time in a brushy creek bottom near a cleared area with several houses and large yards. It often roosted atop a bird feeder but was not observed to eat there, preferring to search the ground beneath the Drumms' grapevines for dried fallen fruit, to scratch in the leaves underneath shrubbery,



Figure 1. The Solon, Iowa, Curve-billed Thrasher

and to search the grass of their asparagus bed.

In an effort to place these Iowa records in context, Rick Hollis, Tom Kent, Pete Petersen, and I have researched the normal distribution of the Curve-billed Thrasher and made a search for records of vagrant individuals. The results are shown in Figure 2. The breeding range of the Curve-billed Thrasher in the U.S. extends from west-central Arizona to central Texas and the southern Texas coast, with an isolated population in extreme western Oklahoma. Within this range it occurs in cactus desert, mesquite, brushland, and suburban shrubbery. Its range is bounded by the low barren creosote-bush desert of western Arizona, the montane forests of northern Arizona and New Mexico, and the open grasslands of the high plains. It is non-migratory and perhaps because of this is an infrequent vagrant. Most have been recorded close to the boundaries of the normal range, in fall or winter. The Curve-billed Thrasher is a casual straggler to the lower Colorado valley and the Salton Sea, but is extremely rare in other areas of southern California, southern Nevada and Utah, northern Arizona and New Mexico, and east Texas. It has been recorded on the Gulf Coast as far east as the western tip of the Florida panhandle, with most of the records coming from Louisiana.

To the northeast of the normal range the situation is different. There the Curve-bill has a striking tendency to occur as a long-distance vagrant, in a broad triangle extending from eastern Colorado to Manitoba and Wisconsin. The sole east coast record, from New Hampshire, is in line with an extension of the southern border of this triangle. What is the source of these long-range vagrants? The most likely source is the Texas panhandle, western Oklahoma and Kansas, northeast New Mexico, and southeastern Colorado. Here the Curve-billed Thrasher is a

sparse or casual breeder. Many of the breeding records are recent and represent extension of the known breeding range, indicating that the species may be expanding, as was suggested by Sutton (in Johnsgard, 1979). Despite its apparent rarity as a breeder, in this area the curve-bill is a frequent winter visitor, often at feeders, and is recorded annually on some Christmas Counts. This may represent winter wandering in response to cold weather and a reduction in the food supply, as is shown by Cedar Waxwings and Robins in Iowa. If this is so then the breeding population of this part of the range may be larger than the small number of nesting records would suggest. Some of these vagrants may "overshoot" and end up in the northern midwest. A presently unanswered question is why these birds have such a strong tendency to move north rather than east: there are apparently no records from eastern Kansas, eastern Oklahoma, Arkansas, or Missouri. This absence is all the more puzzling in view of the general tendency of western vagrants to move east and south rather than north.



Figure 2. Range map and summary of vagrant records for the Curve-billed Thrasher. The breeding range is stippled, and the region of frequent winter records is hatched. Open squares indicate locations of casual or extra-limital breeding, and solid circles designate locations of vagrant birds. The breeding range is compiled from the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds (1957), Oberholser and Kincaid (1974), Johnsgard (1979), Phillips, Marshall, and Monson (1964), Sutton (1967), and Ligon (1961). Records of vagrants are taken from the above references and in addition from McCaskie and Prather (1965), McCaskie, Stallcup, and De Benedictis (1967), Dawson (1923), Whitney et al. (1978), Bent (1948), Peterson (1980), Sprunt (1954), Lowery (1972), Bailey and Niedrach (1965), and a search of *American Birds-Audubon Field Notes*: all bold-faced records back to 1950 are included, as well as all records from 1972 to 1980, and Christmas Count records from 1977, 1978, and 1979. In addition state bird books and/or annotated check-lists for all states except Montana, Idaho, Nevada, and Mississippi were consulted.

Confirmation of the origin of the vagrants requires determination of the sub-specific identity of both the source population and the vagrants. The source population is assumed to be *celsum* since this is the subspecies breeding in the Oklahoma panhandle (Sutton, 1967). The Solon bird has been tentatively identified as *celsum*, as has a specimen collected in southeast Colorado (Bailey and Niedrach, 1965). No other vagrants have been identified as to subspecies except the sole specimen from Florida, which was *palmeri*, the race from western Arizona (Sprunt, 1954).

It is interesting to note that although the Curve-billed Thrasher is a bird of the southwestern desert, it shows considerable cold-hardiness. One survived three consecutive winters at a Buffalo City, Wisconsin, feeder, and another spent two winters at a feeder in South Dakota. This shows that lack of a regular food supply or the presence of competing species, rather than winter climate, must determine the northern boundary of the species' range.

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FIELD REPORTS

FALL 1980

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WEATHER AND HABITAT CONDITIONS

This fall was generally warm and dry. Except for a short-lived snow storm in October, the weather in late fall was mild and water areas remained open.

GENERAL TRENDS

The mild weather was associated with many late records including Common Loon, Lesser Golden Plover, House Wren, Gray Catbird, and several warblers. Waterfowl were notably late and dispersed throughout the season so that concentrations appeared to be down. Red-breasted Nuthatches heralded a widespread invasion of northern species. Increased numbers of Pine Siskins and Purple Finches were followed by many sightings of Snowy Owls, Evening Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, and White-winged Crossbills. Only one Common Redpoll was noted. Hawks were reported in good numbers and there were several sightings of Red-shouldered Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcon and Merlin.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

A Brant shot at DeSoto NWR may provide the first tangible evidence of this species in Iowa. There are a number of old records dating into the last century, but none provide sufficient evidence for placing Brant on the Official List of Iowa Birds. Perhaps the most exciting bird of the year was a Curve-billed Thrasher which took up residence at a feeder near Solon in Johnson Co. Casual species documented during the period included Ross' Goose, Black, Surf and White-winged Scoters, Prairie Falcon and Yellow Rail. Sandhill Crane was also reported. Two accidental species will be referred to the Records Committee for evaluation.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Common Loon: 1 on 28 Nov. at L. Macbride (RHo) was late.

Eared Grebe: There were 4 reports, the first a very early bird in winter plumage: 11 Aug. at Little Clear L. Pocahontas Co. (RC), 7 Sep. at Willow S. (BWi), 14 Sep. at Little Wall L. Hamilton Co. (HZ), and 25 Oct. at Lizard L. Pocahontas Co. (RC).

Western Grebe: 1 at Big Spirit Lake on 15, 21 Oct. (DH); 1 at Montezuma Poweshiek Co. on 22 Oct. (DK); 1 at DeSoto NWR on 2, 29 Oct., 2 Nov. (+JR. m.ob.). The 2 Oct. date (EK fide JD) is early.

Pied-billed Grebe: Barb Wilson monitored grebe populations at Willow S. Mills Co. throughout the fall. Two active nests were present in Aug. Pied-billed counts started with 31 on 2 Aug., peaked at 212 on 9 Sep. and dropped to 9 on 10 Nov. just before the ice drove them south.

American White Pelican: Large flocks on 9 Sep. were 570 in Ida Co. (DBi) and 200 at Hamburg (IG). Willow S. populations varied from 89 on the early date of 1 Sep. to 240 on 16-17 Sep. to 17 on 15 Oct. (BWi).

Double-crested Cormorant: Record early dates were 1 Sep. at Willow S. (BWi) and 3 Sep. at Coralville Res. (TK). A late date was 22 Nov. at DeSoto NWR (TB, m.ob.). Peak numbers were 51 at Willow S. (BWi), 50 at Red Rock Res. (GB), 25 at Coralville Res. (TK) and 22 at DeSoto NWR (HZ).

Great Blue Heron: There were 17 nests at Rathbun L. compared to 34 a year ago (CS). Peak numbers were 200 at Red Rock Res. in Sep. (GB) and 55 at Coralville Res. on 3 Sept. (TK).

Littel Blue Heron: There were reports from Rathbun Res. (CS, BR fide JD), Cone M. (RHo, TK), Sweet M. (RMy, FM, TSJr), and Union S. (TSJr, TSSt, RHa), all in Aug. except for 1 on 8 Sep. at Colyn WMA (BR fide JD).

Cattle Egret: Two reports: late Aug. at Colyn WMA (JC fide JD), 30-31 Aug. at Sweet M. (FM, TSJr, RMy).

Great Egret: Peak numbers were 60 at Red Rock Res. on 6 Sep. (RMy), 40 at Rathbun L. on 17 Aug. (CS) and 26 at Coralville Res. on 3 Sep. (TK).

Snowy Egret: Two reports: 22 Aug. at Waterloo (TSJr) and 30 Aug. at Sweet M. (+RMy, +FM, TSJr).

- Yellow-crowned Night Heron:** Two immatures were reported: 14 Aug. at Union S. NWR (+RMy) and 17 Aug. at DeSoto NWR (TB et al, "legs beyond tail").
- Least Bittern:** An amazing 12 were at Union S. NWR on 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa). Other reports were 2 Sep. in Winnebago Co. (JRH, RB, GZ, DMu), 24 Sep. at Goose L. Greene Co. (BC fide JD) and 18 Oct. at Rush L. Palo Alto Co. (RC).
- Whistling Swan:** 180 were counted at Lock and Dam 9 on 16 Nov. (TK, TSh, CB); 1 was at Boone in late Sep. (DN).
- Ross' Goose:** 1 was reported from DeSoto NWR on 22 Nov. (JR) and 5 were seen on 25 Nov. at the same location (+RJ, RF).
- Brant:** On 2 Nov. a Black Brant was shot at DeSoto NWR (+MM, +RS). Apparently the specimen has been saved for mounting (DKn fide JD). Hopefully the tangible evidence will be available for review by the Records Committee so that this species can be added to the official state list. There have been a number of reports of Brant for over 100 years but adequate descriptions or specimens are lacking.
- Green-winged Teal:** 200 at Forney L. on 12 Nov. was a large flock (TB, SK, BP).
- Cinnamon Teal:** 2 males were at Big Creek L. Polk Co. on 7 Sep. (+JR, +HZ, +PM), and one was shot at Zirble S. Cerro Gordo Co. (SS fide JRH).
- Canvasback:** 3000 were on the Mississippi above Keokuk on 24 Oct. (TK) and 500 at Lock and Dam 9 on 16 Nov. (TK, TSh, CB).
- Ring-necked Duck:** 1 was seen on the early date of 15 Aug. near Council Bluffs (TB, SK, BP, MW).
- Oldsquaw:** A female was shot at Clear L. on 15 Nov. (fide JRH).
- Black Scoter:** A female was well described including a drawing at Volga L. on 21 Nov. (+JS).
- Surf Scoter:** 3 females were observed at Lizard L. on 5 Oct. (+RC).
- White-winged Scoter:** 2 were killed at Rush L. Osceola Co. (DH).

VULTURES THROUGH TURKEY

- Osprey:** There were several unusually early dates: 23 Aug. at Sweet M. (FM, RMy), 31 Aug. in Greene Co. (HZ) and 1 Sep. in Pocahontas Co. (RC).
- Northern Goshawk:** 1 was observed at Sunken Grove Pocahontas Co. on 6 Sep. (+WJ).
- Red-tailed Hawk:** Concentrations of 43 (DBI), 30 (PP) and 29 (GB) were reported. Harlan's Hawks were reported on 29 Oct. and 15 Nov. at DeSoto NWR (TB, m.ob.).
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** 3 at Sweet M. on 4 Oct. (RMy); 1 at Sweet M. on 12 Oct. (FM, RMy); 1 at Davenport on 25 Oct. (PP).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** A juvenile was seen near a nest at Ledges SP on 7 Aug. (PB fide DN).
- Swainson's Hawk:** 2 were at Waucoma Fayette Co. on 3 Aug. (JS); 3 were in Guthrie Co. on 20 Sep. (RC) and 21 Sep. (MN, CN, TK, TSh).
- Golden Eagle:** On 29 Nov. 2 were in the usual location in Allamakee Co. (DK, JS).
- Prairie Falcon:** 1 was seen at DeSoto NWR including a view of the black axillaries (+LP, BP).
- Peregrine Falcon:** There were three documented reports: 19 Sep. at Waterloo (+RMy), 21 Sep. at Dunbar S. Greene Co. (+MN, +TK) and 21 Sep. at Diamond L. Poweshiek Co. (+MN, +TK). Two other sightings were undocumented.
- Merlin:** 21 Sep. at Dunbar S. (+MN, +TK); 3 Oct. in Cherokee Co. (+DBI); 17 Oct. at Davenport (+PP).
- Gray Partridge:** 10 on 15 Nov. 2 miles sw of Waterloo were the first for that location (FM, RMy).

Wild Turkey: 3 adults and 8 young were at Ledges SP on 6 Sep. (HZ).

CRANES THROUGH TERNS

Sandhill Crane: 3 were at DeSoto NWR on 22 Nov. (AS fide TB).

Yellow Rail: 1 was caught by a dog, photographed and released at Big M. Butler Co. (JLH, CP). Another undocumented report was received.

American Avocet: 4 were at Union S. NWR on 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa).

Lesser Golden Plover: Unusually large fall flocks of 200 in Bremer Co. on 12 Oct. (FM, RMy) and 60 in Sioux Co. on 4 Oct. (JV) were seen. Two at Coralville Res. on 22 Nov. were a record late date (+TK, RMy, RM, RHa, JS).

Black-bellied Plover: 1-7 were seen at widely scattered locations in Oct.

Hudsonian Godwit: Two were reported at Union S. NWR on 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa).

Marbled Godwit: Two were reported (no detail given) at Union S. NWR on 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa).

Lesser Yellowlegs: 1 at Cone M. on 24 Oct. (TK) is the second latest recorded date.

Willet: 1 at Union S. NWR on 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa).

Northern Phalarope: 1 at Union S. NWR on 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa); and 4 at Willow S. on 16, 17 Aug. (BWi).

American Woodcock: 1 seen in Dickinson Co. on 9 Oct. (DH) was unusual.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Juveniles were studied and photographed at Coralville Res. on 1-2 Sep. (+MN, +TK). Another was seen at Dunbar S. on 21 Sep. (MN, TK).



Juvenile Short-billed Dowitcher at Coralville Res. on 1 Sep. 1980. Note dark (buffy) breast with fine streaks and edging on tertials with indentations. Photograph by Michael Newlon.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Adults in alternate plumage were studied at Coralville Res. on 3 Aug. and 1 Sep. (MN) and 9 juveniles were at Diamond L. Poweshiek Co. on 21 Sep. (+TK, MN).

Sanderling: 1 on 8 Aug. at Red Rock Res. (TK); 3 on 20 Sep. at Rock Creek L. (MN, CN, TSh, TK); 4 at Red Rock Res. on 27 Sep. (DK); 1 at Montezuma on 30 Sep. (DK).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 1 on 12 Jul at Coralville Res. (MN) is the second earliest record.

Western Sandpiper: A record number of 40 was reported from Union S. NWR on 10

- Aug. (TSJr).** One was at Cone M. on 2 Aug. (+TK), 1-2 were at Coralville Res. on 17, 31 Aug. (TK), and several in Freemont Co. from late Aug. through Sep. (RSi).
- Baird's Sandpiper:** 2-4 were at Union S. NWR on 2, 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa).
- Stilt Sandpiper:** 40 at Union S. NWR on 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa); 2 in Freemont Co. on 21 Aug. (RSi); 4 at Cherokee on 26 Sep. (DBi); 1 at Little Wall L. Hamilton Co. on 5 Oct. (HZ). The last date was the second latest on record.
- Herring Gull:** An immature at Bettendorf on 6 Sep. was early (PP).
- Ring-billed Gull:** 1 at L. Macbride on 27 Sep. was the first date and 420 on 9 Nov. was the peak for this regular fall concentration (TK).
- Franklin's Gull:** Late dates were 6 at Lakin S. Guthrie Co. on 27 Oct. (DN) and 20 near Council Bluffs on 12 Nov. (TB, SK, BP).
- Bonaparte's Gull:** 40-60 were at Red Rock Res. 31 Oct. to 16 Nov. (RT, GB); up to 10 were at L. Macbride from 19 Oct. to a record late date of 27 Nov. (TK); 1 was at Big Creek S.P. on 26 Oct. (HZ).
- Black Tern:** 7 Sep. at Willow S. (BWi) was a record late date.
- PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS**
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** The last date in NE Mills Co. was 30 Sep. (BWi).
- Snowy Owl:** This is obviously an invasion year: reports from 7 areas, the first on 14 Oct. (m.ob).
- Saw-whet Owl:** 1 at Hartman's Nature Center Waterloo on 23 Nov. (RMy).
- Whip-poor-will:** 1 at Montezuma on 24 Sep. (DK).
- Common Nighthawk:** 140 were near Cherokee on 28 Aug. (DBi).
- Chimney Swift:** 50 on 5 Oct. at Cherokee (DBi).
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Two late dates: 20 Nov. at Ledges S.P. (DN) and 1 Oct. at Marble Rock (PK). Rufous Hummingbirds are reported in eastern United States in late fall. They have not been seen yet in Iowa, but late hummingbirds should be observed carefully with this possibility in mind.
- FLYCATCHERS THROUGH STARLING**
- Western Kingbird:** 1 was at Union S. NWR on 10 Aug. (TSJr, TSt, RHa).
- Eastern Phoebe:** 18 at Waterloo on 5 Oct. was a large number (FM).
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Identified on 17, 31 Aug. near Pocahontas based on "yellow wash throat" (RC).
- Cliff Swallow:** 600 at Cherokee on 20 Aug. were migration peak (DBi).
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** 1-8 were reported by most observers. The early dates for this heavy migration year were 30 Aug. at Davenport (PP) and 12 Sep. at Union S. NWR (BC). Early Aug. dates have been noted in prior invasion years (PP fide TK).
- House Wren:** Late dates were 31 Oct. at Red Rock Res. (TR) and 12 Oct. at Coralville Res. (RH, TK).
- Winter Wren:** Reports from 8 areas beginning on 28 Sep. at Ledges S.P. (HZ) with a peak number of 8 at Dudgeon L. (TSJr).
- Northern Mockingbird:** 1-2 seen from Oct. to 7 Nov. near Pleasantville (GB, RT).
- Gray Catbird:** Late dates included 28 Nov. at Volga L. (RMy, FM, JS, TSJr, TSt) and 25 Oct. at Pleasantville (RT).
- Brown Thrasher:** Late dates included 1 Nov. at Shenandoah (RP) and 26 Oct. at Ledges S.P. (HZ).
- Curve-billed Thrasher:** This most unusual bird of the year was reported by Ruby Berridge at her feeder near Solon, Johnson Co., and substantiated on 18 Nov. (+MN, +TK) and on following days (+PP, +RMy, +FM, +JS). See separate note.
- Swainson's Thrush:** 2 were seen in Des Moines on 31 Aug. (RL).
- Veery:** 3 were seen on 1 Sep. at Ames (JR).

Eastern Bluebird: Two very large flocks were observed: 253 at Cherokee on 3 Oct. (DBi) and 150 at Red Rock Res. (JDo fide GB).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 on 1 Nov. at Coralville Res. was late (TK).

Northern Shrike: Two reports: 18 Oct. at Waterloo (TSJr) and 19 Oct. at Cherokee (+MB).

VIREOS THROUGH WARBLERS

White-eyed Vireo: 1 was at Montezuma on 7 Sep. (DK).

Philadelphia Vireo: 2 at Springbrook S.P. on 21 Sep. (FM).

Tennessee Warbler: 1 on 9 Aug. at Meyer L. Winneshiek Co. was early (JS).

Orange-crowned Warbler: 2 on 18 Oct. in Jones Co. were late (PP, banded).

Nashville Warbler: 1 on 18 Oct. at Waterloo (FM, RMy, TSJr).

Pine Warbler: 1 at Manti Woods Fremont Co. on 27 Sep. (RP).

Northern Waterthrush: 1 on 11 Aug. at Little Creek L. was early (RC).

Mourning Warbler: 1 on 4 Oct. at Des Moines was late (RL, banded).

Wilson's Warbler: 1 on 2 Nov. at Coralville Res. was late (+TK, CB).

Canada Warbler: 1 on 9 Aug. at Meyer L. Winneshiek Co. was early (JS).

MEADOWLARKS THROUGH BUNTINGS

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 7 were at Sweet M. on 23 Aug. (FM, RMy).

Blue Grosbeak: 1-2 were seen in Mills and Pottawattamie Cos. on 15, 17 Aug., 2 Sep. (TB, BWi, m.ob).

Evening Grosbeak: The earliest dates were 17 Oct. at Marble Rock (PK) and 31 Oct. at Pleasantville (GB). Flocks of up to 25 were noted from 8 locations in Nov.

Purple Finch: Several reporters mentioned increased numbers.

Common Redpoll: The only report was 1 at Heery Woods S.P. (FM, RMy).

Pine Siskin: Reports from many areas.

Red Crossbill: 12-40 were at Waterloo on 26, 29 Oct. (FM, RMy).

White-winged Crossbill: 1-2 were at Waterloo on 28-29 Oct. (FM, RMy), and 1 was at Davenport on 2 Nov. (PP).

Rufous-sided Towhee: One of eastern race was late in Black Hawk Co. on 15 Nov.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 1 was carefully observed at Willow S. on 5 Nov. (+BW).

LeConte's Sparrow: 6 at Dunbar S. on 21 Sep. (TK, MN, CN, TSh); 1 at Waterloo on 5 Oct. (FM); 1 at DeSoto NWR on 12 Oct. (JR); 1 in Mills Co. on 15 Oct. (BW, TB, BP, SK).

Northern Junco: The first appeared in Mills Co. on 30 Sep. (BW).

Field Sparrow: 2 were at Lock and Dam 9 on 16 Nov. (TK, TSh, CB).

White-throated Sparrow: 1 was late at Clear L. on 21 Nov. (Mrs JH).

Lapland Longspur: 100 were at Little Wall L. Hamilton Co. on 11 Nov. (HZ).
+ — documented.

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COMMENTS

I received a number of late reports for the summer season, apparently due to confusion about reporting dates. Dates and guidelines for field reports are now permanently installed on the back cover to obviate future confusion. Fall reports were excellent including much detail on early and late dates and peak numbers as well as documentations of unusual sightings.

Vernon Kleen has announced his retirement after ten years as Regional Editor of the Middlewestern Prairie Region for *American Birds*. Some may not be aware that all of our original field reports are forwarded to the Regional Editor who selects the most significant findings for the seasonal summaries published in *American Birds*. Mr. Kleen has promoted the concept of immediate note taking in the field to document unusual sightings and placing more emphasis on study of passerines. His review of our reports has provided useful feedback for improving our field observations.

During the past year many new and old reporters have contributed to continued improvement in the coverage of our state and helping better define the species to report. The efforts of Doug Harr, Dave Newhouse and Jim Hansen in providing input from Iowa Conservation Commission personnel is much appreciated. Areas where coverage is particularly extensive include SW Iowa, areas of NW Iowa, Ames, Waterloo and Iowa City.

I feel that the major accomplishment for the year has been the definition of species that should always be documented (*Iowa Bird Life* 50:73) and the setting up of a new Records Committee for the impartial review of unusual sightings. During 1981 we will define a list of species that should always be reported and a list of unusual dates and numbers for other species. The research on dates and numbers is well underway by Jim Dinsmore, Darwin Koenig, Pete Petersen, Dean Roosa and myself and will be published in book form. I would like to thank all those who have contributed ideas for the field reports and encourage others to do so.

WINTER 1980-1981

WEATHER AND HABITAT CONDITIONS

By mid-December a moderate cold snap caused partial freezing of water areas but many waterfowl remained for CBC's. Temperatures remained above normal all winter with only a few light snows and no persistent snow cover. The temperatures climbed into the 50s and 60s in February resulting in early return of waterfowl and other species.

GENERAL TRENDS

The warm weather was associated with scattered wintering waterfowl, although fewer geese remained in s.w. Iowa than in recent years. Large numbers of Canvasbacks wintered on the Mississippi River in southern Iowa. Red-tailed Hawks and Kestrels wintered in above average numbers. The Snowy Owl invasion was quite evident. The lack of a recognizable Horned Lark migration was unusual and not entirely explained by the lack of snow cover to concentrate the birds. Longspurs may have wintered n. of Iowa as only one flock was seen (in n.w. Iowa in January). All species of winter finches were widely encountered but none oc-

curred in massive numbers. A late January and February migration of Robins was noted.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

I will not repeat the unusual findings noted on the CBC. The more unusual regular species noted were Common Loon, Greater Scaup, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Northern Oriole, and Vesper and Lincoln's Sparrows. Casual species noted included Ferruginous Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Glaucous Gull, Varied Thrush, and Pine Grosbeak. Accidental species included two widely separated Curve-billed Thrashers and a possible Hoary Redpoll.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Common Loon: A Loon at Coralville Res. on 12 Dec. missed the record late date by one day (TSta).

Double-crested Cormorant: 2 wintered at Lock 14, Scott Co. (TK, TSh, PP).

Great Blue Heron: Late dates were 12 Dec. at Coralville Res. (TSta) and Red Rock Res. (RT).

Whistling Swan: see CBC.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 18 were at Willow S., Mills Co. by 27 Feb. (BW_i).

Snow Goose: 43 were late at Coralville Res. on 12 Dec. (TSta). Small numbers wintered in s. w. Iowa (BW_i).

Canada Goose: 200 wintered at Rathbun L. and 3 were at Cedar L., Linn Co., on 3 Jan. (TK, CB). Late Feb. migrants were noted from many areas (TK, RMy, PP, CSch, BW_i) with the earliest on 20 Feb. at Red Rock Res. (RT).

Wood Duck: 2 were seen in Cedar Falls in Jan. (FM, RMy).

American Wigeon: Wintering birds were at Lock 14 on 2 Jan. (TK) and Freemont Co. on 13 Jan. (RP). Four were early migrants at Little Wall L., Hamilton Co., on 23 Feb. (JD).

Gadwall: 4 were at Cedar Falls on 8 Feb. (FM, RMy); 1 at Willow S. on 18 Feb. (BW_i); and 6 at Little Wall L. on 23 Feb. (JD).

Green-winged Teal: 1 in Freemont Co. on 13 Jan. (RP); 1 at Cedar Falls on 8 Feb. (FM, RMy); 2 at Willow S. on 20 Feb. (BW_i).

Mallard: 500-1000 overwintered at Rathbun Res. (TK, TSh, MN) and Lock 18, Des Moines Co. (PP) as well as small numbers at other localities. Early migrants were 150 at Willow S. on 18 Feb. (BW_i) and 5000 at Red Rock Res. on 20 Feb. (RT).

American Black Duck: Up to 20 were at Lansing, Allamakee Co., on 10 Jan. (DK) and 14 Feb. (TK).

Common Pintail: One wintered at Cedar Falls (FM). Early migrants were at Willow S. on 18 Feb. (BW_i) and Little Wall L. on 23 Feb. (JD).

Northern Shoveler: 2 were at L. Manawa, Pottawattamie Co., on 21 Feb. (BW_i).

Canvasback: 1500 were at Montrose, Lee Co., on 10 Jan. (PP) and 50-200 below Burlington from 10 Jan. to 17 Feb. (PP).

Redhead: 2 at Willow S. on 27 Feb. (BW_i).

Ring-necked Duck: 20 at Willow S. on 20 Feb. (BW_i) and 7 at Waterloo on 7 Feb. (RMy).

Greater Scaup: 2 late migrants were at L. Macbride on 20 Dec. (+TK) and 1-2 were seen at Lock 14 on 2 Jan. (+TK) and later dates (TSh, MN fide TK).

Oldsquaw: 1 was at Lock 14 on 2 Jan. (TK).

Bufflehead: 1 was at Lock 14 on 2 Jan. (TK).

Hooded Merganser: 4 were at L. Manawa on 21 Feb. (BW_i) and several at Little Wall L. on 14 Feb. (BJ fide JD).

Common Merganser: 30 at Little Wall L. on 23 Feb. were early migrants (JD).

VULTURES THROUGH TURKEY

Bald Eagle: Peak numbers were 342 (280 ad., 62 imm.) from Keokuk to Bellevue on

10 Jan. (PP) and 50 at Riverton WA on 26 Dec. (RMy). Additional Riverton counts were 47 on 7 Jan. and 40 on 17 Jan. (RP).

Northern Goshawk: A Goshawk was well seen and described at Red Rock Res. on 6 Feb. (+RT).

Cooper's Hawk: 1 was seen in Winneshiek Co. on 16 Feb. (DK).

Red-tailed Hawk: Winter counts exceeded averages of the last three years in Story and Boone Cos. (JD).

Rough-legged Hawk: This species was noted by many observers.

Ferruginous Hawk: A bird with features of this species was seen at Riverton WA (+RMy). This is a species designated for review by the Records Committee.

Golden Eagle: Wintering birds were located in Allamakee Co. on 24 Jan. (an adult, DK) and 14 Feb. (an immature, +TK).

Peregrine Falcon: see CBC. Another was reported but not documented. This species must be documented to be accepted for the Field Reports. Winter records are especially unusual.

Merlin: Details were given for 1 seen on 20 Feb. in Freemont Co. (+RP, MS, BWa).

American Kestrel: Counts were more than twice the last three years' average in Story and Boone Cos. (JD).

Wild Turkey: Reports were from Sioux Co. in n.w. Iowa (DHa) and Ledges SP (HZ).

CRANES THROUGH TERNS

Sandhill Crane: Last year's wintering Sandhill Crane seemed most unusual. This year there were two reports: two on 17 Dec. near Ocheyedan, Osceola Co. (RSp fide DHa) and one from 20 Dec. to 7 Jan. at Riverton WA (RP, m.ob.).

American Coot: 1 was at Cedar L. on 3 Jan. (TK, CB). An early migrant was at Swan L., Johnson Co. on 28 Feb. (TK).

Glaucous Gull: One first year bird was at Lock 14 on 21 Dec. (+TK, TSh) and two apparently second year birds were at Lock 15 on 2-16 Jan. (+TK, +PP).

Herring Gull: 8 were at Cedar L. on 3 Jan. (TK, CB).

Ring-billed Gull: 20 were early at L. Manawa on 24 Feb. and 300 were there the next day (BWi).

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: I received 7 reports: 2 from Spirit L. (DHa) and one each from Rathbun Res. (CSco, TK, TSh), Red Rock Res. (DMos), Polk Co. (DMos), Waterloo (RMy, FM), and Shenandoah (fide RP). Dave Newhouse provided a list and map of 35 reports from across the state including 8 that were killed or caught.

Long-eared Owl: Reports were from Muscatine, Johnson, Brewer, Polk and Mills Cos.

Short-eared Owl: Reports were from Osceola, Johnson, Bremer, Boone and Story Cos.

Saw-whet Owl: Locations of single birds were as follows: 6 Dec. at Weise S. (TK, m.ob.), 3 Jan. at Ledges SP (HZ), 10 Jan. at Hartman Nature Center (RMy), 18 Jan. at Iowa City and Coralville Res. (TSta).

Common Flicker: An orange-shafted hybrid died in Lyon Co. and was sent to Iowa State University (DHa).

Red-headed Woodpecker: many wintered.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH STARLING

Eastern Phoebe: see CBC.

Horned Lark: The usual Feb. migration was practically non-existent. Only a few birds were seen at any one time (BWi, HZ, FM, TK).

Tufted Titmouse: Only one was noted all winter in Mills Co. (BWi).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Up to 10 wintered in Ames (HZ). There were five other

reports.

Winter Wren: Four reports: Emmet Co. (DHen), Polk Co. (DMos), Black Hawk Co. (RMy, FM), and Iowa City TSta).

Northern Mockingbird: 1 was near Pleasantville, Marion Co. all winter (RT).

Brown Thrasher: Singles were at Shenandoah on 20 Dec. (RP) and Davenport on 14 Jan. (PP).

Curve-billed Thrasher: The Solon bird remained into the winter and, amazingly, a second bird was discovered at Rathbun Res. (+CSco, +TK, see separate article by Newlon and note by Scott).

American Robin: Many Robins were present this winter. Numbers increased in late Jan. and Feb. suggesting an early northward movement. The largest number reported was 100 near Cedar Falls on 8 Feb. (FM, RMy).

Varied Thrush: Waterloo again had its Varied Thrush for the third straight winter. A male was discovered in early Dec. and was still present on 3 Jan. (+RMy, +FM, +TK).

Eastern Bluebird: The only report was from Mills Co. on 23-24 Feb. (BWi).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Wintering birds were noted in Ames (JD), Waterloo (FM, RMy), and Sioux Co. (JV).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Details were provided for one seen at Cedar Falls on 1 Jan. (RMy, JSb).

Northern Shrike: Reports were from Cherokee (+DBi), Polk Co. (DMos, RMoo fide HZ), Sioux Co. (JV), and Coralville Res. (MN fide TK).

VIREOS THROUGH WARBLERS

Black-and-white Warbler: Documentations were received for one seen at Ames on 19 Feb. (+RM, +MC). Because of the rarity of this sighting, it will be referred to the Records Committee.

MEADOWLARKS THROUGH BUNTINGS

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 1 was reported at a Waterloo feeder on 14 Feb. (fide RMy).

Northern Oriole: 1 was found at Fairport, Muscatine Co. on 14 Jan. (+CR).

Rusty Blackbird: Wintering flocks were noted from Mills Co. (BWi) and Coralville Res. (TK).

Evening Grosbeak: There were reports from all areas of the state.

Purple Finch: Wintering birds were reported by most observers.

Pine Grosbeak: One was in Ames on 7-11, 23 Dec. (+HZ, +MD) and again on 28 Feb. (+SD, +JD). Another was at Mark Sand Prairie, Black Hawk Co. on 27 Dec. (+FM, +MM). A third frequented a feeder at the home of Jim and Dorothy Maish in State Center and was photographed by Carl Kurtz on 2 Feb. (+CK).

Hoary Redpoll: The injured Redpoll with a white rump seen on the Waterloo CBC proved to be a difficult identification problem (+RMy, TK, CB). On close inspection there were a few streaks on the upper rump and debatable other features of a Hoary Redpoll including overall light color, decreased streaking on the underparts and pushed-in bill. The documentations will be referred to the Records Committee for evaluation.

Common Redpoll: Redpolls were present in small numbers at Cherokee (DBi), Waterloo (FM, BMy), Montezuma (DK), Decorah (DK), Shenandoah (RP) and Sioux Center (JV).

Pine Siskin: These were reported from many areas of the state, mostly in small numbers, but 160 were banded at Davenport (PP).

Red Crossbill: Reports were from Waterloo (RMy, FM), Ames (HZ), and Montezuma (DK).

White-winged Crossbill: These were more numerous than Red Crossbills: up to 15

at Davenport from 6 Dec. to 14 Feb. (PP, TK), 6 at Waterloo on 1 Jan. (RMy), 1 at Shenandoah from 21 Dec. to Feb. (+RP, +MS), 1 at Seymour in Feb. (CSco), and 1 at Ames from 19 Jan. to 24 Feb. (HZ), and several in Iowa City in Jan. and Feb. (TSh, RHo fide TK).

Vesper Sparrow: Details were given for one seen near Cedar Falls on 14 Feb. (RMy, FM, RHa).

Harris' Sparrow: Wintering birds were noted in Story, Polk, Marion, Sioux and Freemont Cos. (m.ob.).

White-throated Sparrow: 6 wintered at Davenport (PP); 1 was singing at Waterloo on 27 Dec. (FM); 1 was at Iowa City on 13 Feb. (TSta).

Lincoln's Sparrow: 1 was at a feeder in Mills Co. from 28 Dec. to 24 Feb. (BWi).

Swamp Sparrow: 1 at Waterloo on 31 Jan. was considered unusual (FM).

Lapland Longspur: The only report was a flock of 400 near Sioux Center on 2 Jan. (JV).

Snow Bunting: Several flocks were seen in Dickinson Co. in early Feb. (DHa) and 1 was at Rathbun Res. on 31 Jan. (TK, TSh, MN).

+ — documented.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dick Bierman, Cherokee; Sam Blanchard, Council Bluffs; James Dinsmore, Ames; Douglas Harr, Larchwood; Dennis Henrickson, Estherville; Thomas Kent, Iowa City; Darwin Koenig, Montezuma; Carl Kurtz, St. Anthony; Rene Laubach, Des Moines; Francis L. Moore, Waterloo; Dean Mosman, Elkhart; Robert K. Myers, Waterloo; David A. Newhouse, Boone; Peter Petersen, Davenport; Ruth Phipps, Shenandoah; Conrad F. Schlemmer, Council Bluffs; Charlotte Scott, Seymour; Marie Spears, Shenandoah; Thomas Staudt, Iowa City; Robert Thornburg, Pleasantville; John Van Dyk, Sioux Center; Barbara Wilson, Hastings; Hank Zaletel, Ames.

OTHER OBSERVERS

Carl Bendorf (TK), Steve Dinsmore (JD), Russell Hays (FM, RMy), Rick Hollis (TK), Randy Johnson (JD), Mike Mecham (FM), Richard Mooney (HZ), Michael Newlon (TK), Richard Nuss (HZ), Margaret Oard (HZ), Chris Reed (PP), Ron Spengler (DH), Joe Schaufenbuel (FM), Thomas Shires (TK), Betty Walters (RP).

COMMENTS

According to my records, all except five of the 275 species listed on the IOU Field Checklist were seen in Iowa in 1980. Of these five, Mute Swan and Whimbrel are clearly not regular species. Carolina Wrens, which were greatly reduced over the last few years, were absent in 1980. They should gradually return as they have cycled in the past. Bewick's Wren has disappeared from the state over a much longer period of time. Does anyone know of any remaining strongholds? If so, let me know. The status of the rare and elusive Sharp-tailed Sparrow in Iowa is not known. Seventeen species not on the Field Checklist which were adequately documented in 1980 included Ross' Goose, Black Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter, Prairie Falcon, Sandhill Crane, Yellow Rail, Glaucous Gull, Burrowing Owl, Say's Phoebe, Curve-billed Thrasher, Varied Thrush, Mountain Bluebird, Yellow-throated Warbler, Western Tanager, Pine Grosbeak, and Lark Bunting. Thus the Iowa list for 1980 is 287, four less than 1979. However, three additional species are still pending review by the records committee (Brant, Ferruginous Hawk, Hoary Redpoll). If I have missed any species, please report them to me along with appropriate documentation.

The quality of field reports continues to improve. In the next year I hope we can continue progress on reporting methods and species to concentrate on. We will discuss these issues at the spring meeting. Hope to see you there.

GENERAL NOTES

The Curve-billed Thrasher at Rathbun — In September a friend, Ginny (Mrs. Fred) Drumm, mentioned that she had a strange gray, long-tailed bird in her yard. Her home is on the north shore of Lake Rathbun — a 25-mile drive from Seymour. I suggested it might be a N. Mockingbird and told her to look for white wing patches. The next time I saw her she assured me it wasn't a N. Mockingbird — I suggested other possibilities such as Townsend's Solitaire. Then I was gone for a month and Christmas intervened before I saw the Drums again, but they still had the bird. Ginnie reported it was getting (?) mottling on its breast and had an amber-red eye. I asked her to check the length of its bill, and she called to say it was as long as the distance on through its head. She never did mention the decurved bill, but we were both sure by now that it was a Curve-billed Thrasher.

By this time I was making trips trying to see the bird, and finally on January 28, I had a very good look, and could confirm it. It came first to the Drum's asparagus bed where it worked in under the dead foliage seeming to use its long bill more than its feet. Then it flew to a perch nearby (it has never eaten at their feeder) and sat for some time so that I was able to observe that it is indeed gray, gray (absolutely no brown or taupe) with mottling of a darker gray on its breast. The eye is very red, and the bill not as curved as the bird books show. The belly is creamy-white with rich buffy coloring on the flanks. The white on the tips of the outside tail feathers is evident only when it flies and then only as a "hint". I feel this bird is a plumper bird than our Brown Thrasher, but it may be because he has his feathers fluffed more in our cold weather.

Other birders who were unable to see him in the Drum's yard and who went to brushy area toward the Lake always reported that they heard him before they saw him — his prodigious scratching seems to have paid off however, as he has survived two snowstorms with no help from anyone in what has to be alien habitat.

I think the bird book picture that looks the most like the Rathbun bird is the one in *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds*. Charlotte Scott, Seymour.

OBITUARY

EARNEST W. STEFFEN

Earnest W. Steffen was a noted Iowa bird artist and a member of I.O.U. since 1940. He died at a nursing home in Maquoketa, Iowa, on January 5, 1981. Interment was in the Maquoketa cemetery. His wife, Grace, preceded him in death in April 1980. They had been married for 58 years. Earnest built the house in which they lived at 1000 Maplewood Drive N.E. in Cedar Rapids.

Earnest was born in Grundy County on January 31, 1891. His father went to town to buy a perambulator for him but came home with a copy of *Ridgeway's Manual of North American Birds* instead. At the age of 8 Earnest started drawing pictures of birds from descriptions given in that bird book. When he was 10 years old he started drawing them over on ruled tablet paper and coloring them with wax crayons. His interest in drawing birds continued through his college days at Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, where his studies included Art. Upon graduation he taught school. He retired in 1956 after teaching physically and mentally retarded children for 22 years in Cedar Rapids.

During summer vacations and after retirement Earnest and Grace traveled extensively and visited nearly all of the national parks in the United States. They camped out which gave Earnest an opportunity to observe and sketch the birds in their natural habitat. He painted every species of bird that he ever saw — nearly 400.

About 1956 the Steffens purchased a cabin in Tofte, Minnesota, on the north shore of Lake Superior. Here Earnest painted a series of pictures of birds of the north shore. He lectured and exhibited his paintings at many meetings of nature enthusiasts. His paintings have been exhibited in New York, Los Angeles, Columbus, Omaha and other major cities.

Earnest was a veteran of World War I. While serving overseas he received a shrapnel wound which resulted in the loss of several ribs from which he never fully recovered. Surviving is a sister-in-law, Florence Boyd, of Cedar Rapids. -- Dorothy A. Brunner, Nora Springs.

JACK W. MUSGROVE

Jack W. Musgrove, 66, Director of the Division of Historical Museum and Archives of the State Historical Department, died Saturday, December 13, 1980, of a heart attack at his home.

Mr. Musgrove, of 2414 Adams Ave., Des Moines, was a member of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union since 1938. He was born in Iowa City and studied museum methods and natural science at the University of Iowa before joining the historical department in 1938 as museum assistant. He later was named museum director and in 1959 was appointed acting curator. He received his first six-year appointment as curator in 1960, becoming director of the division when the Historical Department was reorganized in 1974. Mr. Musgrove modernized many of the department's museum exhibits, organized the system of educational tours, and was responsible for the acquisition of new exhibits. He also was instrumental in reorganizing the state archives and in expanding other branches of the department.

An authority on the outdoors, natural history, Indian lore, and Iowa history, Mr. Musgrove often lectured on these topics. With his wife, Mary, he was senior author of "Waterfowl in Iowa," published by the Iowa Conservation Commission in 1943, with the fifth edition in 1977. He also contributed to "Iowa Fish and Fishing," also published by the commission, and to "Wildfowl Shooting in the Mississippi Flyway," published by D. Van Nostrand Co., as well as numerous magazine articles.

Besides the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, he was a member of Adelpic Masonic Lodge, Corinthian Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, American Ornithologists Union, Des Moines Izaak Walton League, Sierra Club, National Rifle Association, National Wildlife Federation, Hawkeye Archaeological Society of Iowa, American and Central Iowa Orchid Societies, National and Iowa Wild Turkey Federations, and the Episcopal Church.

Besides his wife, Mary, he is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Jean Strueber of Nederland, Colorado, and a sister, Edith Musgrove, of St. Joseph, Missouri.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Izaak Walton League National Endowment Fund, c-o Gene Kragenbrink, Midland Financial Savings and Loan, 606 Walnut, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. -- Mary Musgrove, Des Moines.

REVA PIERCE

Reva Mae Pierce died March 3, 1981 in a Cedar Rapids hospital. She was born on the family farm near Winthrop, Iowa, April 7, 1905, the daughter of Homer and Grace Norman.

After education in the public schools and Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, she taught school for two years. She married Fred J. Pierce, at the Little Brown Church, Nashua, Sept. 7, 1926. Two children were born to the couple: Paul, who died in 1970 at age 41, and Florence, now Mrs. Kenneth Fuessley, of Alburnett, Iowa. There are five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Burial was at Winthrop, Iowa.

Reva shared her husband's interest in birds, and she attended many of the

Iowa Ornith. Union's meetings. The Pierces initiated the Union's fall meeting. The first, second and third fall meetings (1947, 1948 and 1949) were held at their Winthrop home. In the early years of *Iowa Bird Life*, when circulation was small, Reva hand-addressed all the mailings. She also read proof for nearly every issue during the 30 years of the Fred Pierce editorship. -- F. J. Pierce.

BOOK REVIEWS

Birds of the Carolinas -- Eloise F. Potter, James F. Parnell and Robert T. Teulings -- University of No. Carolina Press, Chapel Hill -- 408 pp., 338 color photos, one map -- 1980 -- \$14.95.

Birders of the Carolinas can take pride in the new book on the birds of their area. It is composed primarily of species accounts and some great bird photography contributed by many people. For each species the size, range, nesting and feeding habits, and description is given. The range includes habits and abundance while the description includes vocalizations. Introductory sections include a fine illustrated section on the various habitats of the states. Unfortunately A. O. U. common names were used so it does not agree with the new Peterson guide, perhaps a drawback for novice birders. Everything considered it is a fine "state" work and a welcome addition to ornithological literature.

Bird Finding in Tennessee -- Michael Lee Bierly -- Pub. by the author in Nashville, TN -- 255 p., many maps -- 1980 -- paperbound, \$8.00.

A total of 112 birding areas are covered in this state which stretches from the Mississippi River to the Appalachian Mountains. The maps seem quite clear with exact mileages included. The area accounts mention general groups to be found and outstanding species. For many of the areas several exact spots are described in detail. A series of thumbnail sketches of the 342 species four in the state to date is a nice feature. A birders directory, list of local clubs and index to species and places rounds out a fine state birding book. -- ed.

A Field Guide to the Birds of Taiwan -- James Wan-Fu Chang -- U.S. Agent, Petersen Book Co., Davenport -- 324 p., 390 color illus., many maps -- 1980 -- \$35.00.

The most complete guide to date, this book is chiefly in Chinese but species names, status, habitat and period of occurrence are in English. It is much more complete than the two previous books on the island. The color reproduction is good and for species with which I am familiar, accurate. ed.

A Season of Birds - A Norfolk Diary, 1911 -- James Vincent and G. E. Lodge -- A & W Publishers, NY -- 152 p., 90 color illus. -- 1980 -- \$14.95.

Mr. Vincent was gamekeeper on a large estate in the Norfolk Broads area northeast of London early in the century. His diary records daily observations with notes on some early work aimed at species preservation. Lodges' beautiful little watercolors are charming and pleasurable in their own right. ed.

Birds of the Antarctic -- Edward Wilson, edited by Brian Roberts -- Blandford Press, Poole, available in the U. S. from Sterling Pub. Co., NY -- 191 p., 60 p. color and 42 P. black and white illus. -- 1980 -- \$45.00.

Wilson was a companion of Scott on both his Antarctic expeditions as zoologist and chief medical officer. This book, the reprint of a 1967 edition, presents over 300 of these remarkable drawings and paintings. It presents a fine insight into the Antarctic world of the same period as the preceding book, the early 1900s. The journal extracts compliment the art work and broaden our view. This folio size book would be excellent for the arm chair traveler or anyone with a keen interest in this fascinating part of the globe. ed.

Birds of Africa - A Bird Photographer in East Africa -- John Karmali -- Viking Press, NY -- 191 p., 72 color and 140 black and white photos -- 1980 -- \$25.00.

Another stunning portrait of a continent, this a current picture through a camera lens. Some of the photo work is excellent. The accounts of the birds are by family and rather general. It is not a reference book, but very engaging for brief perusal -- more a "coffee table" book. ed.

Galapagos -- Islands Lost in Time -- Tui DeRoy Moore -- Viking Press, NY -- 161 p., 299 color photos -- 1980 -- \$25.00.

This photographic view of the Galapagos is absolutely stunning. Many of the shots are very "frameable". This young lady grew up on these fantastic islands and knows their moods first hand. Largely a self-taught photographer she has captured the feeling of time and place beautifully. Some camera data is given for all photos and it is a must for nature photographers. ed.

Edward Lear's Birds -- Susan Hyman -- Wm. Morrow & Co., NY -- 86 p., 40 color and 50 black and white illustrations -- 1980 -- \$37.95.

Edward Lear is remembered chiefly for his limericks, but early in his career he was a bird painter of great merit. He illustrated some of the finest ornithological monographs of the mid-nineteenth century. The reproductions in this large folio book are fine and frequently we see several preliminary stages as well as the final product. The text capsulizes his life and the total effort gives a good view of the man and his painting. ed.

The Alaskan Bird Sketches of Olaus Murie -- Margaret E. Murie, ed. -- Alaska Northwest Publishing Co., Anchorage -- 63 pp., 52 color illus., 1 map -- 1979 -- paperbound, \$11.95.

This combination of field sketches and diary excerpts allow us to view the unspoiled lands and wildlife of Alaska through the eyes of Olaus Murie. He has come to be a sort of personification of wilderness in our culture. While viewing these sketches one wonders how many other fine art works lie unrevealed in some forgotten trunk. ed.

Peter Scott: Observations of Wildlife -- Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca -- 112 p., 39 color and 66 black and white illus. -- 1980 -- \$19.95.

This book could be termed an "autobiography through art". We are treated to a diverse collection of Scott's art supplemented with a lively commentary on his own feel for his work and its place in his life. The chapter "Concern for the Planet" traces his work with the World Wildlife Fund and other groups which have done so much to promote conservation. It is a remarkable portrait of the life of an outstanding conservationist. ed.

The Magical Realm of Sallie Middleton -- text by Celestine Sibley -- Oxmoor House, Birmingham, Alabama -- 112 p., 44 color illus. -- 1980 -- \$19.95.

Most of the country will be introduced to a new wildlife artist through this book. She displays a very animated style with a great flair for detail. The text is rather biographical and rounds out our introduction to Sallie Middleton. One interesting quirk is the introduction of a Blue Jay feather someplace in almost every painting. ed.

Call Collect, Ask For Birdman -- James M. Vardaman -- St. Martin's Press, NY -- 247 p., 13 black and white photos -- 1980 -- \$10.95.

In 1979 Jim Vardaman attempted to see 700 species of birds in the U.S. and Canada excluding Hawaii. He missed by one, and had number 699 been determined in 1979 he would doubtless have seen 700. Thinking he needed two species he did not go to Brownsville, Texas for a Golden-crowned Warbler that was present on Dec. 31. He covered over 160,000 miles, spent over \$44,000 and a total of 170 days birding. Every species was witnessed by at least one knowledgeable birder. I accompanied Jim several days in California and found him an interesting and friendly person. The project was a true example of the "sport" of birding and the story makes very

interesting reading. ed.

The Peregrine Falcon -- Derek Ratcliffe -- Buteo Books, Vermillion, SD -- 436 p., 4 color and 32 black and white plates, 23 tables -- 1980 -- \$42.50.

Once again we have a beautifully written, complete and extremely authoritative picture of a raptor. Stressing the British studies which he played a vital role in coordinating, the author presents all facets of the bird's life history. Ratcliffe concludes that the Peregrine is not in trouble except in continental Europe, Japan and parts of the U.S. All raptor specialists will definitely want this monograph in their libraries. ed.

The Age of Birds -- Alan Feduccia -- Harvard U. Press, Cambridge -- 196 p., many black and white illus. -- 1980 -- \$20.00.

If you have never really understood the origin of birds and flight this book is for you. Based on the fossil record and the biology of living birds, the author discusses the relationship of modern land birds. Birds have evolved through several "deadends" and some modern forms are among the most successful of living things. This is an important book for the general reader. ed.

A Birder's Guide to Florida -- James A. Lane -- L & P Press, Box 21604, Denver -- 160 p., many black and white photos and maps -- 1981 -- paperbound -- \$7.00.

This new addition to the Lane books follows the usual pattern. It starts with a general description of topography, vegetation, pests, weather, season, common birds, etc. The bulk of the text is devoted to birding areas. Many maps enhance these accounts. Pelagic trips are covered and the best places for finding birds of particular interest are covered by species. A seasonal chart, accidentals list and status key for the five areas of the state round out the bird coverage. Other vertebrates and their habitats are also listed. Campgrounds, bird-oriented organizations and an index round another valuable birding aid. ed.

Birds of Prey of the World -- Friedhelm Weick -- Paul Parey, NY -- 159 p., 40 color plates, 160 line drawings -- 1980 -- \$48.00.

If you are familiar with Peter Scott's *Key to the Waterfowl of the World*, imagine a similar treatment for diurnal raptors and you will be thinking of this book. The 40 plates include 1144 figures, all distinctive races, adult, immature, male, female, and unusual color phases. All are painted in the same position and accompanied by a brief text giving field characters, distribution, and essential measurements. All text appears in German and English. The introduction presents keys for identification and review of the genera. It is a great benefit to have all these races illustrated in one fairly small volume. The main drawback is the price. The book would have been smaller had two editions been prepared instead of one in both languages. All in all, it is very useful for those who travel and can afford the price. ed.

Caged Bird Medicine -- Charles V. Steiner and Richard B. Davis -- I.S.U. Press, Ames -- 172 p., 24 fig, 23 tables -- 1981 -- \$17.50.

This book is aimed at the small animal practitioner who is looking for the basic information required to deal with common disease conditions. It would also seem well suited to small zoos. ed.

A Guide to the Birds of Alaska -- Robert H. Armstrong -- Alaska Northwest Pub. Co., Anchorage -- 309 p., 420 color plates, one map -- 1980 -- \$15.95 paperbound.

Alaska has been badly in need of a guide to many of the species not found elsewhere in the U.S., and not illustrated in other guides. This book combines color photographs and fine paintings by John Pitcher to illustrate all 386 species found through 1979. The text is brief, providing some identification and habitat information and a chart of seasonal and regional distribution. The book seems to fill a void and be an indispensable item for the birder planning a trip to Alaska. ed.

AUDUBON OFFERS ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES SCHOLARSHIPS

The National Audubon Society Expedition Institute today announced that it is making scholarship funds available to graduate, college, and high school students who are interested in the subjects of outdoor education or environmental studies. Financial aid, in varying amounts, will be awarded by July 31, 1981 and may be used for any Audubon educational program or other school, college, or conservation education programs. Application forms may be obtained by the student writing to the National Audubon Society, Expedition Institute, 950 Third Ave., NY NY 10022.

ALCOHOL SPECIMENS WANTED

The Institute For Avian Research is currently searching for specimens or samples that may have been kept in alcohol suspension. There also may be a slight possibility of cryonic suspension occurring at some obscure institution. More specifically a specimen of *ECTOPIS MIGRATORIS* male or female is of no great importance however we will be requiring all pertinent details.

We would like to enlist your periodicals assistance in the form of advertisements. Any information pertaining to advertising policies or contributing to our search would be greatly appreciated. -- Institute For Avian Research, Jeanguy Bisson Director, 240 Pembina University of Alberta, Edmonton Alberta Canada.

COVER

Our 1981 cover artist is David Plank of Salem, Mo. He worked for 11 years as an offset lithographer and pressman, painting birds in his spare time. In 1973 he became a full-time painter of birds. His paintings are done in transparent watercolor and are the result of field drawings done from live birds in their natural habitats (some 15,000 pencil drawings). He strives for a "fresh" watercolor technique rather than attempting to do a highly detailed "feather map" of birds. Correct anatomy, poses, etc. are important to David, but more than this, he tries to capture the "spirit" of a species and to put feeling into the work; giving the viewer another individual's personal interpretation of what he sees in nature, rather than just a "pretty" picture of a bird. ed.

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE FIELD REPORTS

Field reports should be mailed to the Field Reports Editor (T. H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240) four times a year according to the following schedule:

season	mail by	must be received by
Winter (Dec., Jan., Feb.)	1 March	7 March
Spring (Mar., Apr., May)	1 June	7 June
Summer (Jun., Jul.)	1 August	7 August
Fall (Aug., Sep., Oct., Nov.)	1 December	7 December

Reportable species include those that are uncommon or rare and those seen in unusual numbers or at unusual times or unusual locations. Species must be listed in Checklist order and include number of birds seen, date, place (including County if not well known), and observer(s). Reports should be **printed or typed** on 8½ x 11 inch white paper using black ink. Report forms, documentation forms and instructions are available from the Field Reports Editor for one dollar. Species which must be documented are given in *Iowa Bird Life* 50:73, 1980. Full descriptions and accounts of accidental species should also be submitted as a NOTE to the Editor of *Iowa Bird Life*.